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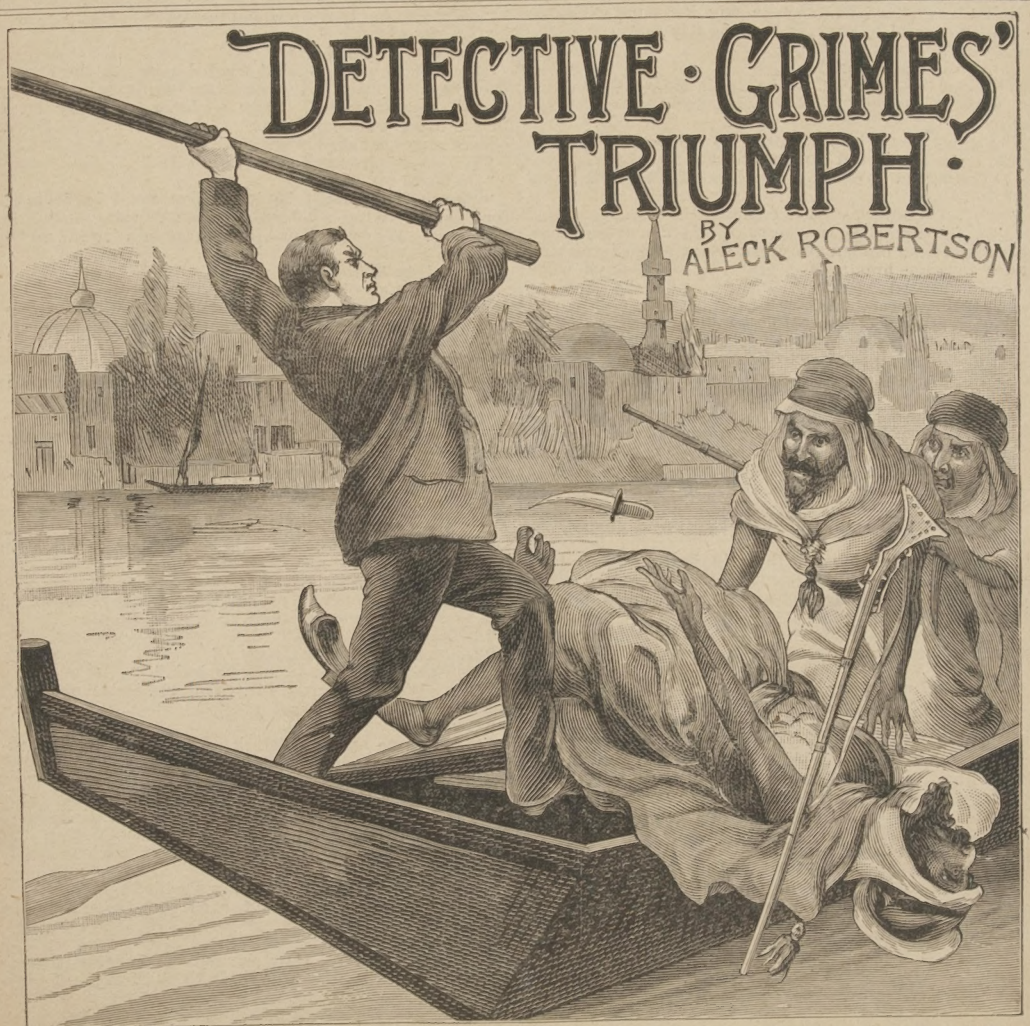
DETECTIVE GRIMES' TRIUMPH

BY ALECK ROBERTSON



WHEN ONE OF THE HEAVY OARS, SNATCHED UP BY THE EVER READY DETECTIVE, BEGAN TO SWEEP THROUGH SPACE, THE TREACHEROUS ARABS REALIZED THAT THE PLACE WAS ENTIRELY TOO HOT FOR THEIR LIKING!

Detective Grimes' Triumph;

OR,

THE SUCCESSFUL ENDING OF A COMPLICATED CASE.

By Alex Robertson.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAND OF THE NILE.

The sun was just kissing the housetops in the quaint Egyptian city of Cairo when the steamer landed her passengers.

Among others who came ashore was a party of three, demanding attention.

In the lead was a rather tall, spare man, with a peculiar face, that seemed to change its expression as each minute passed by.

This man was Obed Grimes, probably the keenest detective New York ever saw.

He had been engaged to accompany Redmond O'Connor and his young wife, Katy, in the long trip they were making abroad.

There was reason for this.

O'Connor was known as the Irish Monte Cristo, and not without reason, for he was the possessor of untold millions.

The story would be a long one to tell, and those who would learn it in detail can find the wonderful adventures of O'Connor in preceding numbers of the LOG CABIN LIBRARY.

Briefly, O'Connor, with a companion, discovered and secured the immense treasures of the Peruvian Incas, which had been hidden away in a secret cave of the wild Andes for some hundreds of years, since the days when the hard-hearted Spaniard, Pizarro, put the king to death, trying to force his secret from him.

This treasure was guarded by seven men, known as the Gonzales, who tracked the Irish Monte Cristo to New York, endeavoring to force him to return the vast amount of gold to the cavern, where it would be buried from the world.

O'Connor and his wife, with the detective and Tom Gratton, went to Europe to elude these pursuers.

In Paris and Rome they encountered various adventures, and when near Constantinople, Tom stole away a beautiful girl named Zella, destined for the harem of a pasha.

Pursuit was made, but Tom and his bride escaped on the boat of Antonio.

The others went to meet them in Cairo, and as they landed at the city on the south shore of the Mediterranean their eyes were kept constantly on the alert, looking for their friends.

"I don't see them anywhere," said O'Connor, as he twisted his head this way and that.

"Nor I."

"What had we better do?"

"Go to a hotel of some sort, as other travelers do. He'll turn up before we set off for the pyramids."

Just then some one poked Mr. Grimes in the ribs.

"Look out there, fellow—bless my soul—Antonio!"

The dark, smiling face of their former guide, and owner of the little vessel on which Tom had made his escape with his bride, looked up at him, and a dingy hand was extended.

"Where's Gratton?" asked O'Connor.

The Italian guide cast a stealthy look around, as though he feared being overheard.

"Safe in Cairo. More I dare not say just at present, signor."

"Very good. We shall see him by and by."

"Oh, yes."

"We intend stopping here for a few days, and arranging a trip to the pyramids. Then, before we do the Holy Land, as the proper season of the year is approaching, we have thought of making a run up to Russia."

"That will suit Mr. Tom, I know."

"Tell us where to put up, so as you can find us."

"There is the hotel—give that slip to the party you engage to take you there. I will call and hear your plans to-morrow, so I can let Mr. Tom know about them."

With which Antonio disappeared.

Mr. Grimes looked after him with a smile.

"I like that fellow—smart as a steel trap," he said, nodding his head in a way he had.

An hour later they were quartered at the best hotel the old city of Cairo could boast of.

They did not mean to stay long.

They met certain English officers, and received much useful information.

Twice Antonio came to see them.

He looked worried.

Mr. Grimes finally took him aside.

"See here, Antonio, I know you are troubled about something or other."

The Italian gave a short laugh.

"Signor Grimes has sharp eyes."

"They have served me pretty well. Make a clean breast of it now—what's wrong?"

"I fear the pasha has followed you here."

"Ah! thinking that we would meet Tom."

"Yes, that is it."

"You are sure of this?"

"I saw him, with several trusted men, on the street. They were looking in the direction of my little boat, as though they suspected. Then we have had a spy come aboard to see what was there."

Mr. Grimes caught his arm.

"Tell me, where are Tom and his wife?"

"On board my boat."

"Then no time must be lost. You must leave here. Tom shall give up all idea of accompanying us to the pyramids. We will join him one month from now—where?"

"Shall it be in Rome, signor?"

Mr. Grimes shook his head.

"He has seen enough of Rome. Besides, we left enemies behind, and who knows but that they may still be around there?"

"How would Venice do, then?"

"Admirably. We can make our way north from there into the land of the White Czar."

"Consider it settled, signor. I will depart before to-morrow morning. One month from now we will meet in Venice."

"Yes, and that wonderful city of the sea will be a fine place for the young and romantic couple to spend their honeymoon."

"Shall we call it settled?"

"Wait one miunte. I would have a few words with O'Connor about it."

Shortly after he came back.

"Everything is agreed on, but O'Connor says he would like to see his friend before he goes."

The Italian considered.

"The vessel is watched, signor."

"How about to-night—it will be dark."

"Yes. We shall arrange it. You remember the spot where you landed?"

"I do."

"Come there at nine o'clock. Give a low whistle, repeating twice. I will be there with a boat."

"Good. It's a bargain."

Antonio soon left them.

On Tom Gratton's account they were not a little uneasy, for the Turkish pasha seemed bent on following him up, and the Egyptian authorities would assist such a notable personage.

Tom would sooner die than give up his bride now, and the pasha had refused to sell her, as was the custom in his country.

The day waned.

They had seen all they wanted of Cairo, and were glad that the expedition was ready to start on the following day for the pyramids.

Mr. Grimes did not join them at the evening meal, but came in later.

O'Connor, looking up, caught a gesture from the old detective, which he rightly interpreted.

The other wished to see him in secret.

What had occurred?

The Irish Monte Cristo was stout-hearted, and for himself knew not the meaning of the word fear, but he now had another to think of—his wife, Katy, besides his friend.

He waited a little while.

Then, consumed by curiosity, and not a little alarm, he made some excuse for leaving his wife, and sought Mr. Grimes.

"You wanted to see me, Mr. Grimes."

"Yes."

"Something has happened?"

"The same old story."

"Tracked again?"

Obed Grimes nodded.

"Confusion take those dark-skinned men. There is no such thing as shaking them off. I've a good notion to see if a compromise cannot be effected with them."

"Not yet, sir. Leave that to me for the future. If they follow us to Russia I'll make them come to terms or get them concerned in some Nihilist plot that will send the whole crew to Siberia."

"But what now?"

"We must give them the slip."

"They can't go with us to the pyramids."

"Not unless they go on their own hook. I wouldn't be surprised to see them there."

"I'm tempted to give up the trip."

"Don't do it. They've only arrived—two of them—and won't have time to arrange any elaborate plot just now. The most they can do will be to spy upon our company."

"As you say, Mr. Grimes."

"You always go armed?"

"Invariably."

"And Katy?"

"Carries that small revolver still."

"Then there is nothing to fear for the present. We will bid Gratton good-by, to join him later in the city on the Adriatic. To-morrow we are off for the pyramids and the Nile. When we return we shall sail at the first opportunity, and get the start of these fellows. In Venice we will cover our trail, and head north."

"Good. You are a capital manager. How about the time now, Mr. Grimes."

"We ought to be starting for the rendezvous."

"Wait until I run in and see Katy a minute."

"Don't tell her that those men have come."

"I will not, but warn her against danger."

"I will await you outside."

In a short time the old detective was joined by the Irish Monte Cristo.

They stood talkng near the hotel for a few minutes, and then suddenly vanished.

If any spy was watching them he would have his trouble for his pains, for the darkness swallowed up their forms.

They had gone to keep the appointment with Antonio.

CHAPTER II.

THE MIDNIGHT COMING OF THE TURK.

"This is the place, Mr. O'Connor."

"You were to give a signal."

"Yes. Listen."

The detective uttered three low whistles that might have passed unnoticed by any one not waiting to hear such sounds.

They were answered.

"This way, signors."

Antonio was close behind them, and just below, rocking on the water, was his boat.

Presently they were in the boat.

"Do you see yonder light on the shore? It comes from the house of a fisherman. There the Turkish spies have their headquarters. They can watch my vessel from that point, and come out in his boats if necessary."

Antonio was pulling now.

He was a sturdy fellow, if small in figure, and the boat moved steadily out in the direction of the light that marked the position of his vessel.

"Are you ready to sail, Antonio?"

"Si, excellency."

They soon reached the little sloop-rigged craft.

A low hail came from the deck.

This pleased the detective not a little.

He saw that discipline was maintained on board the little craft, and a careful watch kept.

Antonio answered the hail, and in another minute they were on deck.

Here Tom Gratton met them.

Warm indeed was the greeting between the two friends—they had shared in the adventures of the past, and there is nothing like danger to bring two whole-souled men together.

They sat down to talk.

The past engrossed some attention.

Then their present position was spoken of, after which they talked of the future plans.

Meanwhile the detective had walked forward with the captain.

They were conversing on different subjects when Antonio suddenly put his hand on the arm of his companion.

"Signor Grimes, look there."

"I am looking."

"What do you see?"

"Several lights moving about."

"Do you remember the place?"

"Yes, it is the cabin of the fisherman."

"And the rendezvous of the Turkish spies."

"Exactly."

"The lights move in one direction principally."

"This way?"

"Toward the water."

"There are boats—they mean to embark?"

"Yes—watch."

They had been on board a long time when this thing occurred—indeed, midnight had come and gone, so that a new day had begun.

Presently the lights vanished.

All was darkness in that quarter save the one light gleaming from the fisherman's cottage.

"They have embarked, Antonio."

"Yes. But why put the lights out if about to go upon the dark water?"

"That's it?"

"Their deeds are evil—they fear light. It would betray their movements, and they are not honest men, I assure you, signor."

"What do you believe, Antonio?"

"That they mean to make an attack."

"Believing Gratton and his bride are here?"

"Suspecting it, signor. If they knew it the pasha would have had the authorities do his work."

"It is almost a mile from that point here."

"True, and against a tide that flows strongly. It will take them nearly an hour to reach us."

"Meanwhile——"

"We will prepare for them."

"Wouldn't it be well to move off some distance, put us ashore, and then sail?"

The Italian shrugged his shoulders.

"Splendid, signor, but one thing is lacking."

"Ah!"

Antonio blew a cloud of smoke aloft. In the light of the lantern it curled above his head in wreaths that slowly climbed aloft.

"We have no wind."

"A fact, by Jove! Not a breath stirring. That plan is knocked on the head."

"There are others, signor."

"Yes, yes, of course."

"Here is one."

He stepped over to the riding light, and with a movement of his hand extinguished it.

Intense darkness followed.

"They will have to grope for us now, signor."

"But probably will find you?"

"Yes."

"Why not up anchor and float away?"

The other shook his head.

"Too dangerous. Other vessels beyond. Besides the noise of getting up our anchor would betray us if they were near."

"You have a better plan?"

"Listen. Below we have a great kettle on the fire. It is filled with hot water. We will keep a close watch. At the first alarm buckets of boiling water will be passed up. We will deluge the Turks. They dislike cold water. We will terrify them with it at one hundred and ninety degrees, yes, at two hundred and fifty."

"But suppose some of them gain the deck—such a thing is possible, you know."

Antonio gritted his teeth.

"Si, signor, but every man is armed, and blood shall flow ere the pirates take the vessel. Warn your friends. I will see to the men."

Mr. Grmies found the two comrades still earnestly conversing.

They were seated on a coil of rope, and had not the remotest idea that danger was near.

In a brief time the detective had acquainted them with the facts in the case.

They were of course deeply interested, but not in the least alarmed.

Both men had passed through too many dangers in the past to fear now.

The situation was simply one that demanded immediate action.

So the men were placed at their stations, so the hot water could be passed up with as little delay as possible from below.

They knew the direction from whence the boats would come, unless, as was possible, they had made a mistake in reckoning, and gone too far above.

"Hark!" said Antonio.

The night air was clear as a bell.

Listening, the three friends could hear the plain dip of oars in the water.

"Two boats," said Antonio, whose ear was trained to recognize sounds on the water, just as a woodman could distinguish the trail of a bird or beast, and explain the source of any noise heard in the forest.

"One on each side, then?"

"Yes, that is what they will do when they discover us. They have not—ah! the sounds cease, you see. They have seen our spars above outlined against the sky, and know we are near. The word has gone out for caution."

Antonio went from one to another in the pitch dark, giving them the last directions.

Every man had his duty to perform.

None meant to shirk it.

Even our three friends were in the affair.

O'Connor and Tom were to dash the hot water on the boarders as they made fast to the sides of the little vessel.

As for Mr. Grimes, he had charge of the lantern, and at a given signal was to light it up.

All was ready.

The Turks would expect to take these on board by surprise, when in reality the boot would be on the other leg, and they were in a fair condition to be electrified.

Antonio crouched near O'Connor.

They were pretty well forward.

The boats would be apt to advance that way, so that the chances were strongly in favor of their discovering them first.

"Here they come!"

Although the darkness was so intense, the starlight glimmered upon the drops of water that fell from the oars—something of this sort flashed repeatedly, and as the attention of the watchers was drawn to a certain point they could very faintly make out the two boats.

The crisis had about arrived.

Every man's nerves were strained as they awaited the anticipated signal.

The boats would rub against the vessel's side in another minute, so Antonio thought the time had come to hail them.

"Boat ahoy! Keep off there!" he cried.

CHAPTER III.

STOPPED ON THE STREETS OF CAIRO.

Both boats shot alongside the bow of the vessel.

As had been foreseen by the calculating Antonio, one of them came down to port, the other to starboard.

Eager hands caught hold of the chains, and the boats were allowed to drift alongside.

Meanwhile what of those on board?

Had they been idle?"

The energetic captain had passed the word along, and at this very moment there lay beside each of the two men, Gratton and O'Connor, a bucket of steaming water, while others were coming.

Antonio had, by virtue of his position of commander on board, constituted himself master of ceremonies for this special occasion.

He saw the time had come for action.

It would not do to wait until the enemy had boarded the vessel.

"Now. Give it to them, signors!" he cried.

Promptly the two men raised the buckets and dashed their scalding contents, without fear or favor, over the indistinct figures below.

Each boat was crowded with men.

As was perfectly natural, the men in the two boats had their faces turned upward, in anticipation of climbing aboard at the very moment the signal was given.

This was unfortunate for them.

The scalding fluid, distributed so judiciously and evenly by the energetic men above, fell upon every man of the intended boarders.

Strange, awful oaths were heard, uttered with the bitter vehemence that suffering brings.

Bedlam had broken loose.

Meanwhile a fresh supply of hot water was placed at the disposal of the two who had constituted themselves the gunners of the defense.

The second supply went the same road as the first, and a new edition of shouts, oaths, groans, and various cries arose from the parboiled wretches below.

Some of them plunged overboard, preferring the chances of drowning to those of boiling.

Others writhed and twisted like contortionists in the bottom of the boats.

One fellow alone tried to board.

Perhaps he was a leader, taking a desperate chance as he had at battles with the Russians during the war, loudly calling upon his demoralized men to follow after him.

Mr. Grimes had by this time thrown some light on the subject by applying a match to the lamp placed under his especial charge.

Antonio, seeing the Turk aboard, picked up a heavy empty bucket, and rushing at the fellow, gave him a terrible whack.

Both Turk and bucket went overboard, nor were either of them ever after seen again by those on board the little vessel.

As those who had grasped the forechains of the sloop let go their hold the boats were now drifting toward the stern.

Our friends were not merciless.

They realized that the enemy had been routed, and the battle was over.

To continue it further would have been slaughter, as the Turks were helpless.

Antonio called out to them to pick up their men and depart in peace.

He was not a blood-thirsty man, and did not seek their lives, though he believed the rascals had received a lesson not easily forgotten.

The last seen of them as the boats drifted away the men were clambering aboard.

Their voices died away in the distance, and once again the night became quiet.

Antonio shook hands with our three friends in his impulsive Italian way.

He was pleased to be associated with such brave men, he declared, vehemently.

Now that the enemy had been routed, O'Connor and Mr. Grimes deemed it expedient to get ashore.

Good-bys were said, hand pressed hand, and the two gentlemen got into the boat with Antonio, who meant to row them ashore himself.

He landed them in about the same spot from whence they had embarked hours before.

They shook hands warmly with the faithful fellow, and wished him all the luck in the world.

Then they headed toward their hotel.

To reach their hotel from the landing they were compelled to pass through a squalid portion of the city.

Just as like as not some sort of an attack would be made on them, for native thieves wandered about the streets at night like wolves and jackals in the desert seeking prey.

Acting upon Mr. Grimes' suggestion both of them held their revolvers handy.

A stubborn defense would likely demoralize their cowardly assailants.

Sure enough, before half of the distance had been passed over, the expected attack came.

Half a dozen men sprang out from a dark corner, where they had been in hiding.

In a medley of voices and tongues they demanded the immediate surrender of the travelers.

The leading man was so close that Mr. Grimes instinctively struck him a terrific blow with his fist, and such was the force of the delivery that the fellow went backward to the ground.

O'Connor opened fire.

He did not shoot to kill, but rather to main.

The confusion was great for a minute.

Dismayed by the sudden downfall of their bold leader, and demoralized under the hot fire from both revolvers, the robbers were in no condition for further action.

They fled panic-stricken.

Some limped or ran down the street, others tried to climb the blank wall near which the tragedy had occurred, while one fellow cast himself upon the ground.

In a trice, as it were, the street was cleared.

Victory was with the tourists.

Mr. Grimes and his friend arrived at the hotel safe and sound, though a little short of breath.

They said nothing of their adventures to any one, but sat down to rest and smoke a cigar.

"Quite a little adventure," said O'Connor.

"Yes, indeed, and but for our promptness in repelling boarders we might have suffered serious consequences."

"I must say you floored that leading rascal in an admirable manner."

"I think we will recognize him again among his fellows, for I believe I broke his nose."

"For my part, I don't think we'll ever be apt to set eyes on him again."

"Don't be too sure of that, sir."

"Ah! there is some hidden meaning back of those words, Mr. Grimes."

"You were not face to face with the man?"

"No."

"I was."

"Yes—well?"

"And recognized him."

"Confusion—do you mean he was——"

"A Gonzales—one of the mysterious seven who have hunted you by land and sea, determined upon causing the restitution of the treasure belonging to the old Incas of Pizarro's time."

"I might have known it. He meant to take me a prisoner, no doubt."

"And kill me."

CHAPTER IV.

TRAPPED IN THE PYRAMID OF CHEOPS.

Soon after the friends separated for the night.

Mr. Grimes had a room one floor from the street—indeed, the whole building was about that high.

A small window allowed ozone to enter, and gave the means of light during the day.

This had a couple of bars across it, as though the proprietor of the hotel did not trust the honesty of the wandering Arab of the street, and provided a safeguard against sneak thieves.

These bars were frauds, and a stout wrench would divorce them from their hold.

Knowing this, Mr. Grimes was careful not to leave anything of value around loose, as these Arabs are governed by circumstances where honesty is concerned.

Every night he went and placed a trap at the window to give warning should a crafty sneak thief or Arab try to enter.

He did this now.

A piece of stout thread passing through two small brass eyelets, one on either side of the window, was the shape it was in.

This thread was in turn fastened to a little tin box hung on the wall, within a foot of where his head would rest.

Should a rude hand strike or break the taut thread at the window a tiny alarm within the tin box would arouse the detective, who from years of drilling was a light sleeper.

So he retired.

Confidence in the trap he had set took all worry from his mind.

Some hours passed.

Then he was aroused.

The alarm had been sprung.

Instantly Mr. Grimes was wide awake.

He raised his head.

The darkness around him was intense, but his eyes were drawn, as a magnet might be to the pole, toward a certain point.

It was just early dawn.

The sky beyond had become a dull gray, and objects might have been seen a square away.

Mr. Grimes could see the full outlines of the window.

He could also make out the head and shoulders of a man who clung outside, his feet, no doubt, resting on a narrow coping that projected from the building below the orifice yclept a window.

There was a crunching sound.

Behold, one of those burglar proof bars had been wrenched from its hold with ease.

The man's figure vanished for a minute.

No doubt he had handed the bar down to a comrade below, and was crouching there to make sure he had not alarmed the inmate of the apartment ere he resumed operations.

The Yankee detective quietly slipped his hand under his pillow.

Drawing out his revolver he raised the hammer, and then sat up in bed.

All was ready now.

The play could go on.

Presently the man's head again showed up, and he resumed operation on the window.

Another wrench.

The second bar was gone, and no obstacle remained to prevent his entering.

Again he crouched down for a time, but as if anxious to enter, and sure that he had caused no alarm by his actions, the Arab once more popped up like a jack in the box.

This time he put his arms through the opening, and began to wriggle himself through.

Mr. Grimes had seen enough.

He thought it high time a stop was put to these proceedings.

Mr. Grimes gave utterance to a dismal groan that must have astonished the chap who performed these gymnastics, when half way through the window, for he came to a sudden halt, his heels extended in the air.

The detective saw those long legs in silhouette against the brightening sky without.

He believed he could strike them once out of three.

At any rate, he was willing to try to the best of his ability.

Taking a quick aim as best the circumstances would allow, he fired.

The report in that stuffy little room was something tremendous, but it was drowned in the roar that broke from the wounded wretch.

All valor was forgotten.

He began to writhe and squirm again, but this time it was with an outward application.

The roars he gave vent to would have certainly shamed a lion of the desert.

Mr. Grimes could have fired again had he so desired, but the detective knew he had put the enemy to flight, and was fully satisfied.

Finally the wounded and thoroughly terrified wretch managed to work his way clear of the window, and dropped out of sight.

At about the same time a clamorous pounding began on the door.

Mr. Grimes removed the door.

The landlord, clad in a dressing gown and slippers, rushed in.

No doubt he expected to find his guest murdered, but Mr. Grimes, who had donned his trousers, gave in a few sentences the pith of the villainous attempt to enter his room.

They went to the window.

On the floor lay a terrible-looking knife, the naked blade gleaming viciously in the candle-light as Mr. Grimes picked it up.

This proved the would-be intruder to have been an assassin after his life.

One of the employees of the hotel was sent to the street below, with a lantern.

The light disclosed bloody stains along the face of the building.

There was quite a pool below, from which ran a trail down the narrow street, showing where the man had limped away, or else been carried off by his companions waiting near.

Mr. Grimes was satisfied.

He had hit the fellow.

That bullet was not wasted, after all.

He could go to sleep again for an hour or two with a peaceful mind.

The knife he kept for his collection.

During the succeeding morning they started to ascend the Nile.

There was quite a party on the steamer, bound for the pyramids, and as tourists always become sociable, our friends had a pleasant time.

The steamer spent some days on the river with the party before landing them.

Finally, with camels and guides, they set out to see the country of the pyramids.

The pyramids were reached.

Our little party were deeply interested by the tremendous work of the ancients.

These huge monuments look as though built to stand until the end of time.

One of them was entered by means of a passage, and explored, several of the Arab guides accompanying them with blazing torches.

The sights they saw reminded our friends of the catacombs, where they had met with such adventures.

Katy had enough of it.

O'Connor said he would remain outside with her, if Mr. Grimes desired to investigate farther, and as there were a number of the tourists to keep them company, he dismissed all scruples about leaving them.

Besides, he had long wished to thoroughly explore one of these peculiar structures, being something of an antiquarian himself.

So he left his friends outside, and with guides bearing torches, once more plunged into the famous mausoleum of the Pharaohs.

Everything was musty around them, as was natural, after being shut up thousands of years, for the entrance to this pyramid was only discovered at a comparatively recent date.

They reached the spot where they had come to a halt on their previous trip.

Few ever went beyond.

The passage was low, and it necessitated considerable work at crawling to go on.

Only adventurous spirits would dare the unknown dangers that lay there.

Mr. Grimes could double up his slim body like a hinge, and worm along anywhere that a fellow human could.

The two men who accompanied him he had not taken much notice of.

They were dark-skinned fellows, dressed in the attire of desert Arabs, and just the same, so far as he could see, as the rest of their tribe.

As they pushed on they came to some strange sights, and the detective felt amply paid for his trouble in coming thus far from the beaten track.

He had seen mummies taken from Cheops, and yet to find them in their original graves was an altogether different thing.

The passage had opened into several chambers, and once more dwindled into a narrow crack, through which they passed in single file.

Thus they reached what appeared to be the end.

A stone wall barred farther progress.

The leading guide knew a trick or two.

Mr. Grimes was amazed to see him push the ponderous rock aside.

A chamber was revealed.

The guide entered.

As he did so he thrust his torch in a crevice that would hold it.

Mr. Grimes saw much to interest him in the gloomy chamber, which was known to few.

He bent over a mummy, swathed in the cloth used for ages by the ancients, and believed he had discovered another Pharaoh.

Engrossed in this work, he did not see the expressive gestures that passed between his guides.

He bent over, examining the details of the inscription that marked the hollow in the rock where the last mortal remains of the ancient ruler lay.

At length he was satisfied.

"Come, forward!" he said, aloud.

His voice sounded sepulchral in that place.

It almost startled him.

No answer came.

He looked around. The torch, fastened in the crevice, blazed away, but he was alone.

His guides had fled, the great stone had been pushed into place, and the Yankee detective found himself left with the dead of by-gone ages.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUN-GOD OF THE PERUVIANS.

This catastrophe was so sudden that even the stoical Mr. Grimes found himself giving utterance to exclamations of surprise.

Then he sprang to where the great rock lay in the passage, shaped by cunning hands ages ago to just fit the cavity and exclude the air.

It was closed.

He could not move it.

Indeed, without the secret that controlled the rock, half a dozen men might have exerted their strength in vain against it.

Taking the light, Mr. Grimes examined the place to discover if it had an outlet.

He found a narrow passage, and at once boldly plunged into it, knowing that his only chance lay during the period the torch lasted.

Difficulties were encountered.

He climbed ascents, and lowered himself to other levels as he found them.

Still the passage went on.

It must bring him out somewhere, he had decided, else those ancients would never have constructed it ages ago in the dim past.

Time had flown.

Consulting his watch he found almost two hours had gone by since his desertion.

He pushed on.

Even the most difficult feats did not halt him in his forward progress. He scaled the steepest rocks, or dropped nimbly down into almost unknown depths with the agility of a trained athlete.

He deserved success if energy and perseverance could command it.

And, thank Heaven, success came.

Rugged Obed Grimes, the Yankee philospher and detective, was too sterling a character to be buried forever in those musty pyramids, with the grim mummified Pharaohs for companions.

He had crawled through an exceedingly difficult passage, and was near the end of it when he heard the sound of voices. Mr. Grimes crawled forward.

Presently he found himself upon a shelf, where the passage virtually ended.

Before him was a chamber lighted by torches—he had dropped his own in the passage—and, looking down, he saw, some twenty feet below, the figures of O'Connor and his wife surrounded by the other tourists and the Arabs.

The head guide put a question in broken English.

"Yes," roared O'Connor, "I'll divide a handful among all who search, and give double that to the one who finds my friend. Away with you."

"Stop! I claim the reward!"

Who spoke?

They looked around in wonder.

One chanced to raise his eyes, and saw the tall Yankee upon the shelf near the roof.

In a moment all attention was drawn to that quarter, and Monte Cristo O'Connor gave utterance to a cry of satisfaction.

"How in the world did you get there?"

"That's a long story to tell at this distance. I will get down first, and then relate it."

In less than five minutes he stood beside his friend safe and sound.

O'Connor shook him warmly by the hand.

He was of the same opinion as the old detective respecting the treachery of the guides.

He had no doubt one of the Gonzales was at the bottom of it all.

"Isn't it time to put a stop to this business?" he inquired, somewhat anxiously.

"When we get to the land of the White Czar," replied Mr. Grimes, stoically.

"You don't appear to worry much."

"Not at all."

"And yet it seems to be your life these men seek now, my friend."

"Glad of it. Old story to me."

"I don't know. It makes me dreadfully uneasy at times. I wish there was some way of treating with them, so that we might find out just what they do want."

"The treasure, undoubtedly."

"Possibly so."

"Come, do you doubt it?"

"It seems reasonable to believe just that, but do you know now and then a suspicion comes into my mind that there is something back of it."

"What induces that?"

"There was a little something I never told you about; perhaps this is as good a time as any. Katy seems to be enjoying a pleasant chat with that English lord and his wife aft there, and we can talk unannoyed so far forward."

They were away up in the bow of the little steamer, and descending the Nile, when this conversation took place between them.

O'Connor looked carefully around.

His actions indicated that he had no desire to be overheard.

The coast was clear.

Mr. Grimes showed unusual interest, for the strange actions of the Gonzales had puzzled him not a little in the past.

He was anxious to solve the riddle.

Watching O'Connor, he saw the latter put his hand into his pocket.

When he drew it out again it grasped a peculiar small box which shone in the rays of the Egyptian sun like pure gold.

That was what it was made of.

"Among the golden treasures in that cave deep back in the Andes, upon a throne made of the golden bricks, I found this. I have always imagined it was venerated by the descendants of the old-time priests who were sun-worshipers, you remember, and have carried it with me, believing that perhaps it might buy my life if ever I was unfortunate enough to fall into the power of this strange league of seven."

He removed the lid by means of a twist.

Mr. Grimes fairly held his breath.

A dazzling flash of light came from within, where lay a golden sun, decorated with magnificent jewels—diamonds and rubies of immense size and fabulous worth.

It was a most wonderful object to gaze upon, and the old detective agreed with O'Connor that this was the sun-god idol the old Peruvians used to worship when clouds hid the original from view, and referred to in accounts of the Spanish conquest.

CHAPTER VI.

THROWN OVERBOARD.

There were Arabs on board the steamer, and believing that one of the Gonzales was disguised as such, it was possible that he might be on the vessel with them, his sharp eyes ever on the alert to discover new facts.

This belief was what caused O'Connor to be so careful about showing the peculiar little sun-god, which he carried on his person.

The sun went down.

They had gone up the river to pick up a party of tourists, and were now headed in the direction of the Egyptian city.

Darkness fell upon the great river.

Mr. Grimes had eaten his supper, and leaving his friends with the merry tourists in the cabin, where songs were being sung, and a good time inaugurated, he went on deck to smoke a cigar.

The steamer was plowing her way onward.

Dimly one could see the nearer shore, low and almost like a level plain.

The tourists were generally below, so that the deck was pretty well deserted.

Leaning over the side of the vessel near the stern the detective watched the white, foamy waves as they rushed away into the darkness.

Mr. Grimes, for once in his life, was taken off his guard.

He had not noticed a dark form creeping along the side of the vessel.

As he leaned over, resting his head on his hands, and in a ruminating mood, this figure crept up behind him.

Suddenly a pair of hands grasped the Yankee detective by the ankles.

A force like that of a modern Hercules was brought to bear on him.

Although he made an involuntary effort to grasp the railing, it was too late, for the grip he gave was broken by his own upward and outward rush into the blackness of space.

He turned over in falling, made a complete somersault, and struck the water on his head.

This served to confuse him for a moment.

He arose to the surface struggling desperately and half strangled.

His clothes weighed so heavily upon him that he came very near drowning.

It was only mere instinct that caused him to struggle, for he was so confused by the blow on his head that he could not collect his ideas and realize what had really happened.

By the time he did get his thoughts into working order the lights of the steamer were quite a distance down the river.

Mr. Grimes was deserted.

Worse still, he found himself struggling for life in the black waters of the Nile.

The nearest shore was a quarter of a mile away.

Could he ever live to reach it, burdened as he was with his clothes?

Fortunately he was a good swimmer.

Taking in his bearings as well as he was able, he set his teeth together, and struck for the shore.

He finally found himself near the bank, and crawled out of the water.

But he now found himself in quite a lamentable position, being soaked through and through.

He sat down to think.

In his pocket he had a waterproof match safe, and could he but find some dry wood a fire might be started that would bring comfort.

He began the search.

An hour passed by, and then on the river-bank he found trees growing on a small bluff.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARAB RIVER THIEVES.

He soon found wood enough.

The matches did not go back on him, and presently a cheerful fire blazed.

Before this he warmed himself, and allowed his garments to dry.

When an hour had gone by Mr. Grimes felt none the worse for his involuntary bath, and yet he realized that it had been a narrow escape.

He lay down to sleep.

Morning found him safe and sound.

He was hungry.

The mere consciousness that he had nothing to eat added to his pangs, and made him ravenous.

Cairo was miles away.

To reach the city he must tramp over swampy land and level desert, following the river.

At the same time he must keep the stream ever in view, in the hope of seeing a boat from which he could get temporary relief.

Through the morning he kept on.

It was hard work.

Noon came.

Mr. Grimes was tired and hungry, but kept straight on.

About the middle of the afternoon he saw some men in a boat.

They were Arabs.

There were three of the men, dark-skinned fellows all, and ugly as sin.

He was about hailing them when he saw that the boat was already being propelled toward the shore a little distance below where he stood.

Under the circumstances he thought it worth while to stop and see what they meant to do.

Landing, they secured the boat.

Presently a fire was started.

The Arabs were about to make a meal.

When the odor of their rude cooking reached the hungry Yankee he could hold out no longer.

Walking forward he surprised the trio.

They showed alarm, and made as if to pick up the singular guns all had carried.

Mr. Grimes, however, held up his hands to show them that he came in peace.

All people even to South Sea cannibals understand such a gesture.

The Arabs saw he was alone, and realized that they really had nothing to fear.

Mr. Grimes sat down.

He knew many Arabs, from coming in contact with the foreigners, learn to talk a little English.

Perhaps one of these men might.

He would try them.

To his satisfaction he found that the tallest of the three could understand what he said, and reply in a manner, so the Yankee proceeded to explain that he had fallen from the descending steamer on the river, and came very near drowning.

His object, of course, was to reach Cairo.

If they would take him there at once he would pay them well.

To show what he meant he took out three English sovereigns, and handed one each to the desert Bedouins.

How the fellows' eyes shone.

"Tell your companions that if you take me to Cairo at once I will give each of you five of those gold pieces."

The leader communicated this to the others.

Their eyes fairly snapped.

They immediately stepped over to unfasten the boat, but Mr. Grimes called them back.

Desert that appetizing mess cooking there—not if he knew what was good for him.

Cairo could wait.

When he had communicated his wants to the Arabs they looked at each other significantly.

Then they began talking volubly.

Finally Mr. Grimes was invited to be seated.

One of the men brought him a portion of the meat, and placed it beside him.

When the meal was over Mr. Grimes stepped to the boat, as if to signify that he was ready to make the voyage.

All entered the boat.

The trip was begun.

It was pretty well along in the afternoon, and darkness would overtake them long before they could hope to reach the city.

Mr. Grimes sat in the stern.

One of the Arabs occupied the bow, while the other two pulled the long oars.

Aided by the swift current of the river, they would make rapid progress.

The day waned.

Following the twilight came darkness again.

The stars shone above, but they seemed to be gems set in a black velvet pall.

They gave no light.

The Arabs pulled on, but the current was doing the steering for them.

From time to time he could hear the man who sat in the bow talking to the rowers when they rested from their manual labor.

Although it was little Arabic Mr. Grimes knew, he had picked up a few words and phrases by talking with a guide in Cairo.

When he heard the man in the bow say very plainly "dead man," he pricked up his ears.

That meant danger.

Were these dark-skinned pirates conspiring to suddenly set upon him and do murder.

They thought they ran no risk.

The golden sovereigns had aroused their cupidity, and like the man in the fable they would kill the goose that laid the golden eggs.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. GRIMES SEES THE INSIDE OF AN EGYPTIAN DUNGEON.

While Mr. Grimes was waiting, with every nerve strained, for the coming attack, the ever flowing River Nile was bearing the boat and those within it rapidly onward.

The city was drawing nearer.

If they had resolved upon an attack it must come speedily, for in a short time they would be in the neighborhood of the various craft at anchor before the city of the Nile, and such work as these miscreants contemplated be made dangerous.

The darkness was against him.

He could not watch his foes.

All the same, he kept his eyes constantly fixed before him, believing that he might see a movement on their part, especially if they stood up.

The two men had taken their oars in, or shipped them.

This was a strange action, if they were honest in their intentions, with Cairo so near that they might draw in nearer the shore on which the city was located.

He knew what it signified.

Danger to him.

He realized that one of the Arabs was crawling along the bottom of the boat toward him.

No doubt he had a weapon of some kind in his hand, perhaps a keen knife, with which he meant to settle the foreigner.

Mr. Grimes did not mean to let him advance too near before opening fire

Listening intently he made sure a man was advancing upon him.

He extended his arm, holding the revolver.

Having made pretty sure where the crouching, crawling Arab was located, the Yankee detective pulled the trigger of his revolver.

There was a sharp report, accompanied by a flash.

The darkness was illuminated for a second, and Mr. Grimes was gratified to notice that he had not made a terrible mistake.

That one flash of light gave him a chance to ascertain how things lay.

He looked upon the three men.

One was crouching close to him just as he had anticipated.

The others were farther back, their attitude one of expectancy, an eager look upon their dark faces, that changed to one of astonishment and dismay even during the exceedingly brief period of illumination.

It was as if they realized that their plans had been suddenly frustrated.

Had his shot been successful in nothing else he felt he would have been amply repaid to see how the land lay just then.

But it was successful.

No sooner had darkness followed the bright flash of the burning powder than a most tremendous yell rang over the water.

A genuine Arab has good lungs, and on occasions he can give the most diabolical shrieks and howls that ever greeted mortal ears.

Quickly succeeding the howl came a loud splash in the water.

The Arab, who had been wounded, had arisen to his feet, lost his balance, and gone over.

He could be heard floundering about.

Mr. Grimes had made a good beginning, but he had no intention of stopping here.

There were still two desperate Arabs in the native boat with him, and if he gave them half a chance to recover they would in all probability open fire on him.

Though the guns of these desert wanderers are rude weapons, when discharged at close quarters they prove terribly effective.

Mr. Grimes had no desire to test the efficacy of the others' aim.

He immediately followed up the line of attack which he had already inaugurated so auspiciously.

Turning his revolver in the quarter whence he had seen the two men he blazed away two, three times in quick order, shooting low so as to wound rather than kill.

A great commotion followed.

Consternation reigned among his foes.

When one of the heavy oars, snatched up by the agile and ever ready detective, began to sweep through space around them, they realized that the pace set was entirely too hot for their liking.

Terrified, the dark-hued sons of the burning desert sprang from their own boat into the river.

They preferred to take their chances in the dark waters of the Nile than to remain longer in the same boat with this foreign devil.

What became of them Mr. Grimes never knew.

He believed they must have reached shore, even wounded as they were, and even if this was not the case he had nothing to reproach himself with, since they had brought this on themselves.

When he made sure that the boat had been cleared of his foes he placed the oars in the position where they belonged.

Then the boat's head was turned toward the city, heading up stream a little.

The shore could not be far away now.

He pulled desperately.

With an ordinary boat he would have had little trouble in reaching it, but this tub was so heavy and cumbersome that it was only after Herculean efforts he reached the shore.

His lucky star took a drop here.

He was just thinking himself the most fortunate man in the world to come through all these troubles so well, when, without warning, he found himself face to face with more difficulty.

Several men pounced upon him from a place of concealment near by.

Naturally the independent Yankee objected to this attention.

He struggled desperately to shake them off.

Thinking the assailants must belong to the same party with whom he had just had his adventure, and believing they would kill him if he ever fell into their clutches, he fought for freedom with the fury of a madman.

Twice his long arm went out, and on each occasion one of the unknown enemy was floored.

They were too many for him.

One hung upon each arm, while a third got on his back and hugged him affectionately.

Finally they managed to get his hands secured together, which fact surprised the old detective some, as he did not think they would go to that trouble, but immediately murder him.

He was fated to be even more surprised.

When thus secured they began to hustle him away through the streets of Cairo.

His surprise grew apace.

Finally they entered a building he had seen before, and recognized now.

It was the jail.

What did this mean?

He had done nothing deserving such treatment.

Perhaps it was a case of mistaken identity.

He was thrown into a dungeon.

Here he lay for hours.

When it was morning, as he saw by the dim light that entered his cell through a narrow aperture, he was visited by a jailer, who left him a jug of water and a loaf of brown bread.

Mr. Grimes tried to get the man to talk.

The fellow shook his head.

Then the Yankee took out a note he had addressed to the governor of the prison.

Holding this out he made gestures, with a piece of money also elevated.

He tried to say the word governor in Arabic, but not succeeding, patched some phrases together.

Eagerly he looked to see the result.

The dirty faced jailer, dimly seeing his actions and hearing his words, pocketed the coin coolly, but held the note in his hand as if uncertain.

At length Mr. Grimes reached the end of his vocabulary, and grew angry.

"Oh! go along with you—take it to the governor," he said, turning away in disgust.

"To the governor, is it? Bedad, why wasn't ye afther saying the same long ago, instid av makin' such gorilla faces at me. Sure, it's to the governor I'll take it wid pleasure, yer honor."

And the supposed Arab marched out, leaving Mr. Grimes speechless, yet amused.

The note brought the governor—an Englishman.

He soon saw that instead of a noted desperado his native officers had captured the wrong man.

With a profusion of apologies the American tourist was invited to dine with him, and hungry Mr. Grimes could not well refuse.

So it was well along in the afternoon when he set out through the streets of Cairo to find O'Connor.

CHAPTER IX.

LOOKING BACKWARD.

The old detective was glad enough to be well over his troubles. It was easy enough to laugh at them, now they were in the past, but at the time they had been serious enough.

He could give more than a passing thought to his young friend.

During the time he was overcoming the obstacles in his way down the Nile he hoped nothing had happened to O'Connor.

Those who had tried to put him out of the way, recognizing in him the watch-dog who never slept, had done this thing in order that the Irish Monte Cristo might the easier fall into their hands.

Only two nights and a day and a half had passed since then, but this was time enough for any person to carry out a plan.

The nearer he got to the hotel the greater became his fears as to the result.

What if he should find O'Connor dead, or counted as missing?

So worried did the detective become that he inwardly reviled himself for a fool because he had given these men a chance to get rid of him.

They would live to grow considerably older ere they found such a chance again.

The Cairo hotel was in sight.

Eagerly he fastened his eyes upon it.

Oh! that O'Connor would appear in the door.

Nearer he went, but the form he longed to see did not show up.

At length Mr. Grimes entered.

There was a clerk in charge.

With a calm face and his heart almost in his mouth, Mr. Grimes sought this functionary, who chanced to be a Frenchman.

"Where will I find Mr. O'Connor?"

The man looked at him strangely.

Somehow or other that look almost froze the blood in the detective's veins.

It seemed to him so significant.

"You ask for Mr. O'Connor?"

"Yes."

"Then I presume you do not know."

"What, man?"

"Ze facts in ze case."

"Where is O'Connor?"

"I do not know if he is living—he is not here?"

"Good heavens! man, what terrible thing has happened to him—speak, I implore you."

"Think of ze worst zat could happen. Sacre! I have small doubt but ze poor man he choke to death before now, and he deserve it."

"In the name of Heaven, will you tell me what has happened to my friend?"

"He quarrel with ze proprietor about one leetle thing, and bag and baggage he go over to ze other hotel, where they will surely murder him wiz ze villainous cookery in a week."

"The devil! is that all?"

"All! You think it a small matter, but it will cost him dear. Ze whole world shall know of it. Ze business is ruined, and will go to ze dogs. Think of all Cairo laughing in zar sleeve at such a trick. Ah! wait, revenge is sweet, and through the law it will come. Sacre! we will have one big satisfaction."

"Do you know whether he took my things? I am the friend who was with him."

"He take everything—yes, even ze good name of zis noble house."

"Good-day."

Mr. Grimes was somewhat relieved.

He had been tremendously alarmed at the words of the Frenchman, believing some evil had befallen the Irish Monte Cristo.

If the worst was a change of diet and lodgings he did not know that this would kill him—at least not in a limited space of time.

He started toward the other hotel, knowing where it was situated.

Presently the other hostelry was reached.

With some trepidation the detective again made his way into the presence of the man in charge.

"Is Mr. Redmond O'Connor stopping here?"

This time it was an Englishman he dealt with.

The other eyed him cautiously.

"Why do you wish to know?"

"I am his friend, Mr. Grimes, of New York."

"Ah! indeed, he will be glad to see you. He has been greatly worried about you."

"Then he himself is safe?"

"Yes."

"And his wife?"

"They are up in their rooms now. You will find quite a change from the other place."

"I presume so. Will you kindly direct me?"

"With pleasure, sir."

Presently Mr. Grimes found himself before the door of the private parlor.

He knocked.

"Come in."

That was O'Connor's genial voice—thank Heaven he was all right.

Mr. Grimes pushed open the door.

He stalked into the room.

No sooner had the eyes of the Irish Monte Cristo fallen upon the face of the intruder than he sprang to his feet, and gave vent to a shout.

"Bless my soul, it's Grimes. Katy, do you see, too, or am I going out of my mind? It's our good friend, Obed Grimes, alive and well."

Another instant and the impulsive Irishman was shaking both hands of the old detective vigorously, indeed.

Katy came up, and also greeted him warmly.

It brought tears into Mr. Grimes' eyes to see and realize how much these young friends had grown to think of him.

"Now, sit right down, and tell us what happened to you. We began to fear you were food for the crocodiles at the bottom of the Nile."

"Small thanks to the rascal who tossed me overboard that I am not."

"Then you were thrown over?"

"Yes, indeed. But I will tell you all. Let me have a cigar, please. I'm dying for a smoke."

"Stay, we've had dinner, but you——"

"Oh! I've dined royally with the governor of the city prison here."

O'Connor and his wife exchanged glances.

"The prison?"

"Yes, indeed, I've languished in a dungeon ever since about ten o'clock last night. For twelve hours I've been looked upon as the most desperate criminal of modern times—a river thief."

Mr. Grimes chuckled, and the others had to laugh aloud.

"Your pardon, friend Grimes, but really it is too comical. Take a seat here by the window. You look warm."

"Well, I've been in both a cool and a hot place of late. I'll tell you the story."

So he began.

From the moment he left the cabin of the Nile steamer for a walk on deck he traced his course down to the fright he had when the French clerk of the rival hotel made him believe something terrible had happened to his friends.

He was a capital hand at telling a story, and modest withal, though no point escaped him.

Those who listened could almost imagine they were with him, as he battled for life in the surges of the mighty river, or faced the three desperate Arabs when they sought to murder him.

It was all so vivid.

Finally he ceased.

O'Connor could not resist shaking hands again.

"You must allow me to congratulate you, sir, on your narrow escape. Nothing but Yankee pluck and endurance could have carried you through."

"I owe a good deal to it, that's a fact."

"You don't know what became of the three Arabs in the river?"

Mr. Grimes shrugged his shoulders.

"I do not. I gave them every chance to escape with their lives that a man not a fool could do. If they failed to avail themselves of my generosity it is no fault of mine."

"Granting that they live, I would give something to know what they think."

The detective laughed.

"They call me a foreign devil."

"And, no doubt, by this time have come to the conclusion that it must have been the Old Nick they picked up on the river-bank."

"It was no quarrel of mine. I would have paid them just as I promised had they taken me to the city, but they thought I carried a gold mine in my pockets, and couldn't wait. By this time perhaps they have realized their mistake."

"While you were undergoing these trials, Mr. Grimes, these devils tried to get some of their work in here," said O'Connor.

"Ah! I feared as much. In what way?"

"They tried Doyle's plan."

Mr. Grimes glanced toward Katy.

"To abduct your wife?"

"Yes, sir, and only for the other experience the thing might have succeeded."

The plan referred to was tried in New York by a rejected suitor of Katy's named Felix Doyle. He decoyed Katy with a letter which she supposed Redmond had sent her.

CHAPTER X.

THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT.

"Thank goodness it failed to work. Tell me how it happened," said the old detective, watching the color come and go in Katy's young, enthusiastic face.

"You remember Felix Doyle decoyed Katy under the pretense that that letter was from me."

"Yes—that you had forgotten a basket of lunch and fruit for the steamer—the hack was at the door, and she could jump in, drive to Pursell's, and be back again at five—I remember."

"Well, unfortunately for the success of their plans, these fellows adopted something of the same order. Read their note."

He handed it to Mr. Grimes.

The latter read:

"KATY:—I have found our friend. He is badly hurt, and needs a woman's care. Come at once—vehicle at the door. O'CONNOR."

When he had read this through the detective's brows showed evidence of thought.

He looked from under them at the others.

"Those fellows are shrewd enough."

"Yes, indeed, and the bait must have caught, only for the other affair."

"Ah! you had told your wife to pay no attention to any such letter?"

"Unless there was a certain mark about the way I signed my name, showing it to be genuine. This lacks it, but is like my usual signature, which they have gotten hold of."

"Then she didn't go."

O'Connor looked toward his wife.

"She wouldn't be here if she had. I have no idea as to what they meant to do—probably hold her for ransom."

"I was in a quandary. You see the letter appeared all right, but the signature was all wrong. Then I feared you were suffering so. I almost decided to go, when I saw Redmond's face before me, and remembered his distinct warning."

"You sat still, then?"

"I looked out of the window, and saw the vehicle sent for me. The driver was a dark-faced man, and this made me suspect he might be one of my husband's enemies. So I determined to remain and suffer the consequences, but I was so nervous I walked the floor two hours."

O'Connor laughed.

"I found her doing it when I returned. On my part I was decoyed away by a note, apparently coming from an Egyptian officer, who said there was an American at his house, tall and spare, who seemed out of his mind, but who had mentioned my name. I did not suspect any trap, but as a precaution took a couple of English officers with me, and hurried to the far-away home of the supposed writer of the note. When we arrived there we were detained almost fifteen minutes, as he was engaged with a gentleman, and as the latter went away there was something familiar about him, and it later on flashed upon me he was one of the Gonzales."

Mr. Grimes nodded.

"Exactly. You see, he was there to kill time and keep you waiting, so his confederates might have a better chance to get their work in."

"That's what I concluded."

"Two to one, Mr. O'Connor, you found the officer did not write that note."

The other laughed.

"Oh! you've guessed that already, I see. Well, it was the exact truth. My friends introduced me to the officer, who was a genial fellow.

"'What can I do for you, Mr. O'Connor?' he asked.

"'I came to see if the poor American in your charge is a friend of mine.'

"His brow became knit at once.

"'Poor American! Pardon me, I do not quite catch on, as you Yankees say.'

"I received a shock at once. Taking out the note I handed it over. He read it.

"'Did you write that, colonel?'

"'I did not.'

"'Then it is a fabrication?'

"'A base forgery,' tearing it up.

"I waited for no more, seeing the idea was probably to take me away from Katy. Leaving my friends to explain matters, and with a few words to them, I left the house. It seemed an eternity to me, on the way back to the hotel, and I could hardly speak to the proprietor as I entered. Rushing to my room I threw open the door, and at sight of my wife almost sank down, such was the revulsion of feeling."

"When did this occur?"

"This morning. I have been back about two hours only."

"Well, we have much to be thankful for, that the schemes of these men have fallen through thus far. They are a desperate set of characters, and just as determined upon their course as in the early days of the campaign."

"I am tired of this country."

"Then why not leave it?"

"Can we?"

"I will find out secretly. We may throw our foes temporarily off the track, so as to allow us to recruit our strength, but I have given up the idea that they can be long deceived. I am a detective, and have met some cunning characters, but these men beat all."

"Find out as soon as you can, for the quicker I get out of Egypt the better."

"We may find some vessel bound for Venice."

"That would be luck."

"It would take us there ahead of time, but that makes little difference."

"I have a longing to get to Russia. The peculiar habits of that great nation always had a charm for me. Besides, there is that in the Nihilist question that interests me."

Mr. Grimes looked quickly at him.

"That's dangerous talk in Russia, sir."

The Irish Monte Cristo laughed.

"Oh! I understand all about it, Mr. Grimes. There is little about the Nihilists I do not know."

"Good heavens, man, I hope you don't belong to a league or set of them. One whisper to that effect would put us all in dungeons. Money avails little in Russia when the suspicion rests upon a man. It is Siberia with him then."

"Don't trouble yourself about me. I'm too prudent a man to be mixed up in any such business. Besides, you forget, I have double cause for discretion now that I have

a partner to care for," and he put his arm tenderly around Katy as he spoke.

Mr. Grimes arose.

"Well, I must be off. I have business on hand, seeing about that vessel, and to do it, too, without those fellows knowing it."

He bade them good-by.

They did not see him again until the shades of evening had begun to fall.

Then he joined them at supper.

O'Connor was trying to guess what success the other had met with from his face, but he might as well have tried to read the features of the stone Sphinx for all the satisfaction he got.

"Well, what luck, Mr. Grimes?"

"O'Connor, how long would it take you to get ready to leave Cairo?"

The Irish Monte Cristo looked at his wife.

Say an hour, eh, Katy?"

"Not more than that. We are champion travelers, and carry very little, preferring to buy and leave behind as we go. An hour would do."

Mr. Grimes rubbed his hands.

"That is well."

"You didn't expect such an answer?"

"No. I thought you might do it in two or three."

"Then you have met with a chance?"

"Yes. A vessel leaves about midnight."

"For Venice?"

"No, for Rome, Gibraltar, and London."

"Well?"

"I have made arrangements whereby they will land us at Brindisi, in south-eastern Italy, where we can take the regular steamer up the Adriatic Sea for the city of Venice."

"Then we must hurry."

"Not at all. Take your time. Hostile eyes may be upon us now. I have given it out that we will leave to-morrow for the Holy Land—every one about the place knows it by this time."

"Advise us."

"After dinner we will go to our rooms, and do what packing is needed. At half-past ten a porter will come for your trunk. We will leave the hotel in a conveyance, go direct to a pier, where a boat will be in waiting, and be conveyed on board the ship. The vessel will immediately proceed to make sail, and when morning comes we will be far out on the broad Mediterranean, with our foes left behind."

"They will be active."

"Ah! yes, we know that, but, you see, we are bound to have the start of them. They will learn that we sail on the Trieste, and that the port is Rome. Hence, when the steamer leaves here they will be on board of her. The chances are in favor of their arriving at Rome ahead of the ship. Imagine them awaiting us. When they learn we are not aboard they will have a set back, but you know and I know this will not hold them there long. Men of their cunning will soon learn where we left the ship, and off they post for Brindisi, which place can be reached only after an exceedingly tedious railway ride from Rome, so I am informed. Here again they miss us. We have gone on the steamer to Venice. So they must take that long journey by rail or steamer, and finally bring up at the Queen of the Adriatic, so that, allowing for all chances, I calculate we shall have a good start—several days at least, in which to look around, and perhaps leave them in the lurch."

They talked over their plans.

Care was taken at the same time not to let any one overhear them.

They seemed in no haste about what they were doing, and one would never suspect the party intended leaving in a few hours for a long voyage up the Mediterranean.

Retiring to their rooms they made ready.

Mr. Grimes had seen that arrangements were made for everything.

They knew that what he had done could be depended on.

At the time named a knock sounded on the door, and opening it a native porter stood there.

He carried the portmanteau down to the vehicle engaged for the occasion.

Our friends followed.

Their reckoning was paid, tips of prodigious size made to all the servants of the hotel, and presently they were off.

Through the dark streets they drove, a link boy running ahead to light the way.

It seemed a success.

"I think we have given our friends the slip this time," laughed O'Connor.

"Not so sure about that," returned Mr. Grimes.

"How so?"

"Because at this very moment there is a man clinging to the back of this vehicle, whom I believe to be one of the Gonzales seven."

CHAPTER XI.

MUTINY ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.

"The duse you say, Mr. Grimes!"

"It's a fact. If I were to fire a bullet through the back of this queer old vehicle just now you'd hear a howl of anguish."

"What keeps you from doing it?"

"Well, in the first place, there is a little uncertainty that it might be an innocent party stealing a ride. Then again I don't know that it would do our cause any good to wound or kill one of the members of that terrible vendetta."

This was said while they were being bumped along the streets of Cairo.

The rude shocks received were enough to very nearly dislocate one's neck, and talking was such an effort that they did not keep it up long.

At length the water was reached.

The boat which was to take them aboard was in the proper place.

Mr. Grimes looked sharply around for the dark figure that had been riding behind, but he only caught a momentary glimpse of the unknown as he slipped away in the gloom.

They entered the boat.

Few words were exchanged.

The captain gave the order and four oars fell in the water as one, and the boat shot away.

Perhaps a discomfited man stood on the shore and saw them disappear with considerable surprise and chagrin.

They reached the ship.

As soon as they got aboard orders were given to hoist the anchor, as sail was already set, and presently the vessel was moving through the water, heading almost due north.

Our friends had comfortable state-rooms, the captain and mate having given up theirs.

On most of the great steamers this habit has become a settled institution.

The captain's room is generally taken at a fancy price, and he gets half of this.

As this vessel was not intended to carry passengers, the officers would probably divide the large sum paid to land our friends in Italy, where they could take the steamer to Venice.

The morning opened dull and heavy.

A storm seemed brewing.

They were out of sight of land in all quarters but one, and the Egyptian coast was low down.

The Mediterranean, though accounted a calm, peaceful sheet of blue water—the field of romance, history, and song—can, upon occasion, kick up quite a disturbance.

It soon proved this fact.

The storm came.

During the day it increased in violence, and at nightfall was terrific.

That night—would they ever forget it?

The lightning flashed, thunder bellowed, and the rain fell in torrents at times.

As a furious wind was howling at the time, the waves dashed madly, and consequently the vessel seemed but a chip on the heaving seas.

They could remember now how centuries ago, St. Paul had met just such a storm on this great sea and been shipwrecked.

Were they fated to the same end?

Katy was a good sailor, but even her brave heart was troubled at the situation.

Death is an awful grim monster for a young and healthy person to meet.

One thing favored them.

They were far out at sea, and the danger of being dashed upon the treacheruos rocks did not come, specter-like, to haunt them.

Through the livelong night the storm kept up, rocking the vessel fearfully.

Her crew were Italians.

Their prayers could be heard at times as they besought some patron saint to keep them from the terrible doom that threatened.

When Mr. Grimes made his appearance on deck he could but notice the black scowls that were bent upon him.

"Bless my soul, if I don't believe they take us for so many Jonahs," he declared to O'Connor.

Remembering the fate of the original Jonah, cast from the ship, he thought it better to go below.

Toward morning he was moving on in the direction of the deck again.

The storm had broken, but closed up again, and was raging as furiously as ever.

Loud voices met his ear.

He managed to make his way to where the speakers were to be found.

In the dim light he saw the captain talking with several members of the crew.

They were tremendously excited.

Finally the captain thrust a pistol under the nose of the man he was arguing with, and ordered him on deck, the fellow and his comrades sullenly obeying. As they passed by Mr. Grimes they looked at each other significantly, and scowled at him in such a black manner that, thinking he was about to be attacked, he put his hand to his pocket, and drew his revolver.

The sight of this seemed to cool the anger of the men a little, and they moved away.

Mr. Grimes entered the place.

The captain and his two officers were deep in consultation over the matter.

"What's wrong, captain?" asked Mr. Grimes.

"Oh, the men, they are a little mutinous, that's all."

"Queer time for a mutiny—in the midst of a storm that may send us all to Davy Jones' locker."

"That's just it—you see—well, I don't know——"

"Out with it, captain; I don't blame you, but your men think we've brought ill-luck."

The other nodded.

"I am ashamed of them, but Jack is the same the world over, wherever you find him."

"It is so."

"They say you are Jonahs, and that the storm will never let up so long as you are aboard."

"Exactly. Of course you assured them that as they ran the vessel the Jonahs would be dumped overboard, and all else saved."

The Italian captain looked at him in a queer way—he did not understand a joke.

"I told them you were my passengers—that in good faith you had come aboard my vessel, and that I would land you at the place agreed upon if two planks of the ship held together."

Mr. Grimes took his hand and pressed it.

"You are a gentleman and a scholar, captain. If those rascals attempt to give you trouble, call on O'Connor and myself to stand by you. You will find we long ago learned how to face danger."

"I will do so, sir."

"Then I will go back to my friend and prepare him for the possible encounter."

"Let me arrange a code of signals with you."

This was speedily done.

The passengers could be notified of danger in time to meet the emergency.

It was hardly expected that the men would proceed to such extreme measures, and yet the captain assured him there were several among them who might make trouble.

The day had come.

It was a gloomy, fearful morning, and yet ten times preferable to the terrible darkness that had concealed the grandeur of the storm.

Our friends remained in their cabin, waiting for a change.

It might be for the worse or better—no one could say which.

While talking thus, there suddenly sounded the blow from the boot heel on the top of the cabin.

This was twice repeated.

"The signal! The men have mutinied?!"

Mr. Grimes and O'Connor sprang up, revolver in hand, and went out.

Katy knew what she was expected to do, and she immediately fastened the door with the bar placed there for that purpose.

When the two men reached the captain's side they found him at bay.

Quite a hot encounter had already taken place.

One of the mates had been stricken down, and rolled into a corner, while the other officer, together with the captain, were defending themselves as best they might against half a dozen and more men.

The appearance of our friends on the scene made a change in the aspect of affairs.

They sprang forward with a shout.

The vessel was not rolling so badly now—it seemed as though the sea had quieted temporarily to allow this question of supremacy to be settled.

Mr. Grimes' quick eye picked out the leader of this mutiny.

He was an old grizzled sea dog, with an ugly squint to his eye.

To all appearances he might have been one of the ancient buccaneers who waylaid the silver ships from the Spanish Main.

Springing toward this greasy sailor the detective aimed and fired his revolver.

The man, though wounded, uttered a horrible curse, and leaped toward the door.

This was the signal for flight.

Demoralized by the action of their leader the men followed suit.

In a moment, as it were, the field was cleared, and the victory won.

The stricken mate was looked to.

He was found to be only senseless, having received a blow on the head from a flying belaying pin, hurled through the air.

From the captain they learned the pleasing inelligence that the storm was gradually wearing itself out, and they were safe, although the men had not seemed to realize this fact.

Making their way to the deck they saw this was indeed the truth.

Again it seemed as though fortune had been exceedingly kind to these children of hers, watching over their safety in time of peril.

They turned back.

Katy would, doubtless, be anxious about them, for what with the roar of the tempest and the swinging, plunging motion of the vessel, there were enough things around her to alarm even as brave a soul as the wife of O'Connor possessed.

As they drew near the cabin O'Connor suddenly grasped his companion's arm in a clutch that was almost that of frenzy.

"Tell me," he said, "did we not hear Katy bar the door after we left?"

"Yes, most certainly."

"But, look here!"

The detective did so.

What he saw almost paralyzed him also.

The door of the cabin stood partly open—it had been burst from its hinges by the force of a heavy body hurled against it, for splinters showed where it had been torn from its hingers.

This was significant of force.

Through the minds of both men there flashed a single thought.

The mutineers, driven from the spot when our friends had charged upon them, had come here, intent upon carrying out a part of their infamous scheme at least, and tossing the lovely passenger into the hungry maw of the sea, as if they believed the monster, satisfied with this victim, would calm down and spare the ship.

No wonder both men stood as if turned into stone by the sight.

It seemed to freeze their blood.

For the moment they were incapable of motion.

Then Mr. Grimes sprang forward, and O'Connor almost staggered after him.

As they reached the broken door their eyes went beyond to see a form lying there.

It was a man.

He had evidently been shot as he was passing through the door-way.

By whom?

O'Connor's heart gave one bound of hope.

He knew Katy had a revolver, and that he had taught her how to use it.

Had this warm reception been enough to teach the mutineers a lesson, or had they rushed in to tear the brave little woman away to death?

O'Connor gritted his teeth, and pushed into the reeling cabin, determined to know the worst.

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER THE STORM.

It was a terrible moment of suspense.

If Mr. Grimes felt his heart almost cease beating under the emotion that swept like a great wave over him, what must have been the feeling of the young husband as he strode across the threshold, and let his burning eyes glance around the dimly lighted cabin?

The presence of the dead or wounded mutineer was sufficient evidence that the enraged men had rushed here after their repulse by the officers, determined to wreak vengeance on this helpless one at least.

Mr. Grimes uttered a groan.

The dim morning light, entering through the bull's-eye windows of the cabin, showed him empty space—not a living being was visible.

Then the worst had come.

Katy had been sacrificed to the superstition of the sailors—they had thrown her into the angry sea, helpless, crying for mercy, perhaps, when no mercy existed in those cruel hearts.

The devil would have to take care of his own when that enraged husband rushed in among the men of the forecastle to avenge Katy.

Better for them that the sea had swallowed the ship at that supreme moment.

Mr. Grimes did not forget his friend.

O'Connor would need comfort.

The vessel was still plunging and rolling in the heavy seas, although with less violence than at any time yet.

It was possible to stand for a time without some support.

O'Connor, after that one wild glance around, staggered back, he would doubtless have fallen to the floor but that the wall sustained him.

"Katy—gone—all is lost!"

These words fell from his lips.

He was the most dejected-looking man the eyes of a friend ever beheld.

Mr. Grimes would have given worlds had he known how to comfort the other.

This was impossible.

Words were useless in the face of the heavy blow that had so rudely fallen.

Before his eyes he saw mentally the lovely form of Katy, borne aloft upon some cruel, mocking wave, her golden hair wrapped about her—the bride of the sea of death!

Mr. Grimes had removed his eyes from the harrowing spectacle of his friend's anguish for a moment, but his gaze was again drawn toward him as if by a magnet.

He half expected to see O'Connor ready to sink upon the cabin floor, or else his face showing the awful workings of a madman's.

To his surprise he saw the other's head raised.

An eager look was on his face.

It was as though an angel voice had spoken to him from on high.

"Hark! didn't you hear it, Obed?" he asked.

The old detective feared for his reason.

"What was it?"

"The signal whistle Katy and I arranged that we might always know each was near."

Of course it was an hallucination.

Better to humor the poor fellow, though.

"Suppose you answer it, then."

"I will."

He gave a clear, bird-like whistle.

It could be plainly heard in spite of the thunder of the battling waves, and the roar of the storm.

To the intense surprise of the detective it was answered from near by.

His amazement did not make him forget his natural cunning.

"Call to her, sir."

"Katy! Katy!"

"Is it you, Redmond, dear?"

"Yes. In Heaven's name where are you, darling?"

"Here!"

There was a little closet, or a big locker with a door, in the captain's cabin, used by him to keep his shore clothes and charts, which had, of course, been emptied out for Katy's benefit.

The door of this opened.

Out came brave Katy, as natural as life, and still holding in her hand the little revolver with which she had defied the mutineers.

O'Connor's grief had been pitiable, but his joy at the recovery of the wife he thought forever lost to him was radiant.

He clasped her in his arms and covered her blushing face with passionate kisses.

"Sure I thought I had lost you, mavourneen—that the scoundrels had thrown you into the cruel sea to drown. Heaven be praised!"

"And I feared those awful men had murdered all of you, and had come to finish the work when they pounded on the door," she said.

"You shot one of them?"

"Yes," with a shudder, "I was determined to avenge your death rather than save my own life—that was why I did it."

"Tell us about it."

"I thought I heard shots beyond, but was not sure. While I waited and listened, with my heart in my mouth, so to speak, loud voices sounded outside, and then they began to break the door in without asking me to open. I stood right here, and waited as bravely as I could for the rush. The door went back. A man pushed through. I aimed deliberately at him, and pulled the trigger. With the report he fell, and the others, uttering cries of alarm, fled. I feared they might return, and so sought shelter in the closet yonder, determined to once more use my pistol if necessary. Then I heard Redmond's signal—all was well, and you had returned to me, safe and sound. Redmond, dear, will you see if that poor wretch be alive or dead? I would not have him suffer more than it were necessary."

Her woman's heart spoke there.

O'Connor would not have cared if the brute were dead, but in his joy at recovering his own, he could afford to be merciful.

Mr. Grimes was ahead of him.

Stooping he turned the man over.

A groan followed.

As they had suspected, it was the same ring-leader of the mutineers who had been shot while trying to beat down the captain.

Neither of the wounds he had received were necessarily fatal, but each one had given the scoundrel a severe shock when received.

The second bullet, fired by brave Katy, seemed to

have struck the man on the frontal bone, and for the time he had been rendered unconscious.

"Lay hold, Mr. O'Connor, and we'll carry the fellow to the captain. We don't want him sprawling around here at any rate."

The Irish Monte Cristo was agreeable.

Between them they had no trouble in carrying the wounded wretch out.

When the captain saw him, and heard the story, he was exceedingly angry, and was for tumbling the wretch overboard at once.

The others persuaded him against such a course, and carried their pioint.

He agreed to put the man in irons and let him live to take his chances for inciting a mutiny on the high seas, a crime that was equal to murder in the eyes of the Italian government, he declared.

Mr. Grimes bound up the fellow's first wound, which was bleeding freely still.

Then they went back to the cabin.

The gale was rapidly subsiding.

In a few hours sail was once more gotten upon the vessel, and they sought their course.

It had been a pretty narrow escape, on the whole, and all were thankful that it was no worse.

Katy had received quite a nervous shock.

Under the watchful care of her husband she soon forgot the dreadful experience.

The weather became delightful for several days.

It was a pleasure to sit on deck and look upon the blue sea, kissed by the last rays of the descending sun, and dimpled with the new breeze coming up with the declining day.

Flying fish leaped from the water, and their inevitable pursuer, the sword fish, could be seen threshing about with his death-dealing weapon.

Birds were flying about—the stormy petrel and the albatross sometimes alighting on the masts.

The ship glided along under the influence of the new breeze.

A young moon hung in the sky.

About nine o'clock the lights of Leuca were seen close upon their port quarter.

The breeze was favorable.

If it continued, by morning the stanch vessel that had weathered the awful gale so gallantly would have reached her destination.

This in itself was a pleasure.

They kept near the land.

Sounds floated over the stretch of water to their ears, for they can be heard twice as far upon the sea as on land.

They could even distinguish different voices.

Then came the sweet sound of a mandolin, and the serenade song of some dark-haired Italia's daughter, mayhap seated with her lover in the flower arbor, from whence was borne the delicious fragrance wafted to those on board the vessel with the white wings on the moonlit sea.

They sat up until late that night.

The twinkling lights on the shore, the perfume of lemon and orange blossoms filling the air, until it was heavy with the fragrance, the magic spell of the young moon's silver light, and the murmur of the parting water at the bow, all these things combined to make a night that would live forever in their memories.

When they arose the next morning the vessel was at anchor before a town.

It was Brindisi.

Here they were to change the sea for the land.

By rail they could go on to Venice, the wonderful Queen City of the Adriatic.

Breakfast was eaten.

It would be their last meal on board.

Katy had something on her mind, it was plain to be seen.

She had become a great favorite with the captain, and he was her slave, gruff old sea dog as he seemed to be.

"Captain, I have a favor to ask you."

"It is already granted."

"Ah! but you do not know—it is greater perhaps than you may suspect."

He colored, as if he suddenly guessed the truth, and then bowed again.

"It is granted, signora."

"Your men have been models since the storm?"

"Yes, indeed."

"It was a salutary lesson to them?"

"I have no doubt of it."

"Myself and those with me were the cause of the mutiny on board."

"Ah! but you see you were my guests."

"If we had not been on board the mutiny would not have occurred?"

"That is true."

"Then I beg you to temper justice with mercy. For my sake, forgive the leader. He is penitent, and he has a family in Florence."

"You have seen him, signora?"

"Yes, I have had several talks with him. He did not ask for mercy, but talked about his family as I drew him on."

The captain gave an order to the first mate.

Presently the mutineer came on deck minus his irons.

He looked as if he expected to be hung.

The captain spoke some words to him in Italian.

It was worth seeing to watch the light that came upon the dark face of the giant.

He came forward, bent upon his knee, and reverently kissed the hem of her dress, at the same time calling upon Heaven to bless her in the name of the loved ones at home, who would ever remember the signora in their prayers.

The time came to land.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS BLACK GONDOLA.

Fortune favored them.

The captain landed them at the Italian town, and here they learned that a steamer for Venice was about due.

Sure enough, before noon she put in an appearance and they went aboard.

The passage was pleasant in some respects.

Then again they were glad when it was ended on the next day.

Venice was sighted in the morning.

How strangely she looked lying upon the water.

No other city in the world possesses these same peculiarities, and the Queen of the Adriatic stands unrivaled in her supremacy.

They disembarked.

Some streets there were, but in the main the old city has waterways, and gondolas take the place of carts and street cars.

It was all very strange.

They could well appreciate the feelings of those who had written about this odd city of water.

Her palaces were odd-looking structures. They interested our friends because of the halo of history and romance that time had hung over them; but American eyes, used to seeing the modern palaces of our millionaire princes, were not apt to be startled by the noble appearances of these dingy arrays of marble.

There was much to see in Venice.

Their time was limited, too.

On their track came a specter that forever haunted their footsteps.

This was the grim pursuer who had followed them from the start—the league of the descendants of the old Peruvian Incas.

First of all, to find Gratton.

He had left word at the office of the American Consul where he could be found.

They surprised him, being nearly a week ahead of time.

He acted as a guide, for a week in Venice had given him command of her ways.

They admired the Bridge of Sighs, looked over the Doge's palace, explored many of the channels leading from the Grand Canal, and saw nearly all that was worth seeing.

Thus several days passed.

It was really time they were departing.

Their pursuers would reach Venice speedily, and the trouble begin again.

So it was decided that on the morrow they would start away from sunny Italy.

Much lay beyond to see before they reached the country of the White Czar.

Had they not been harassed by the constant fear from those who chased them they would have enjoyed the trip very much, indeed.

As it was, the worry consequent upon this constant chase produced a feeling of feverish unrest, and they wished to be constantly on the jump.

"I tell you what it is, gentlemen," said Gratton, as the three smoked their cigars after supper, while the ladies were in the parlor of the Venice hotel, "I am growing tired of this business, and I declare it must soon stop or we'll all go crazy."

O'Connor nodded his head.

"What you say is true, Tom. What would you propose in this matter?"

"Well, I reckon, we'll have to take 'em one by one and drop the bog trotters."

"Yes, but in what way? Would you kill them?"

Gratton shrugged his shoulders.

"They've tried it on us often enough."

"True, but they have a grievance."

"Well, my life's valuable to me, and if men try to take it they assume the risk."

"Correct."

"Besides, there may be other ways."

"Name them, my dear fellow."

"That I am hardly able to do, but I am sure our good friend, Mr. Grimes here, can invent some method of shelving them by degrees. Suppose we get one arrested here as concerned in a plot against society—he will be kept months in jail before he is tried. A second and third can be disposed of in Germany as spies in the employ of France, and you may be sure they will be spirited away in a hurry once this charge is made against them. That leaves four. They may follow us to Russia. There we will arrange a nice little plan with some plotters, and have the whole quartet transported to Siberia as ardent Nihilists."

The others laughed.

"Why, Gratton, you are clever enough at inventing schemes to be a detective," said O'Connor.

"I yield the palm," modestly declared Mr. Grimes

"Now you're after poking fun at me."

"Indeed, no. What you have suggested might be carried out in an emergency."

"What's on the programme to-night?"

"A last moonlight ride on the Grand Canal."

"On one of the little steamers?"

"Bah! they're an innovation that will destroy the glory of Venice. No, we will go in a couple of gondolas."

"Are they engaged?"

"They will be outside in waiting in an hour."

It was charming to ride in one of these boats while the moonlight danced over the waters and played upon the palaces on either hand.

Never, while they lived, would they forget the sensations of such a time.

Then the music to be heard as the Venetian boatmen sang while working, or ladies on board the gondola accompanied themselves with guitar or mandolin—it was doubly sweet when heard upon the water.

An hour afterward they entered the gondolas, and sat under the canopies.

Mr. Grimes accompanied O'Connor and his wife.

They traversed the Grand Canal.

Scores of boats glided to and fro.

The night was perfect, and seemed made for just such work as this.

Time passed almost unheeded.

Mr. Grimes had been quiet for some time, and at last O'Connor noticed it.

"Why so silent, Mr. Grimes?"

"I was thinking."

"Of what?"

"Have you noticed a black gondola pass us, the canopy of which is peculiar in its shape, being rounded instead of pointed like others?"

"Yes."

"Well, there is something mysterious about that boat—the party aboard of it is certainly curious about us, for he keeps following this craft, now and then meeting us, and passing around, as though he would see under this canopy."

O'Connor looked out.

Sure enough the black gondola was following very close behind them.

"Have you been able to see the party?"

"Not distinctly—he crouches in the shadow and keeps pretty well hidden."

"Perhaps——"

"I know what you would say, and it may be so, but somehow I am inclined to believe otherwise."

"Who else would follow us?"

Mr. Grimes laughed lightly.

"My dear sir, you have forgotten that every large city swarms with rascals who only wait for an opportunity to steal or do some evil deed whereby they may gain wealth. Italy is peculiarly afflicted in this respect, and I reckon we have all heard in song and story of the crafty Venetian bravo"

"True, true."

"Well, it has become known that you are a man with unlimited means."

"I'm sure not through any word of mine."

"Ah! but your actions speak louder than words. It is well known, I can assure you on that point, because I have been approached by several different parties desiring to know if you were Mr. Vanderbilt, the wealthy American, traveling under another name."

O'Connor laughed.

"Well, Mr. Vanderbilt couldn't show much more of a pile than I can, I reckon."

"Under these circumstances, you see, it wouldn't be very singular if a clique of men got together and determined to kidnap you."

O'Connor gave a dismal groan.

"Well," said he, "I've often heard before of the curse of riches, but never realized the truth of the saying. After this I'm going to give up all show, and make out that I am only a man with a snug allowance, traveling on a certain income. It will pay."

"Quite right, sir."

"Now, about this unknown party in the black gondola—does he mean to do us harm, do you think, Mr. Grimes?"

"I cannot say. I believe our gondolier must be in league with him, for on several different occasions I have seen him wave a handkerchief out of the boat, as if making a signal."

"Ah! you answered it once?"

"Yes—you noticed me?"

"I did not think anything of it at the time, but now I remember it well."

"We will watch developments."

"He follows like a sleuth-hound."

"Now he draws nearer."

"The place is rather lonely."

"Make ready for trouble, then."

The black gondola had increased its speed.

Coming with the current and breeze, it made fair progress, and the gondolier, instead of a pole, wielded a long paddle dextrously.

It happened that they had reached a spot where the Grand Canal was wrapped in quiet.

The hour had grown late, for time passes almost unheeded upon such a pleasure trip.

Had a careful selection been made, it is doubtful whether one could have discovered along the whole length of the canal a place better suited for a deed of violence.

It seemed very probable that the unknown party in the dark gondola had made up his mind to try conclusions.

He must have been a very daring bravo if he meant to assault them alone and unaided.

Mr. Grimes did not have a very high opinion of this class of men.

He likened them to wolves.

One was generally a coward, and would only fight when

cornered—they hunted in packs, and their very number gave them courage.

Never had he known this to fail.

Therefore he looked around to see where the fellow's confederates were.

So far as he could make out there was but one man in the other gondola besides the boatman.

Looking around he failed to see another boat in sight just then.

This was a singular fact.

Mr. Grimes confessed to being surprised.

It seemed incredibe to believe that this man would have the nerve to attempt the deed alone.

If so he was no ordinary bravo.

Perhaps one of their enemies had arrived in Venice, and was already at work.

The idea did not seem so much out of place as it had a short time before.

He was more ready to believe it now.

What could be the man's motive?

Mr. Grimes watched like a tiger.

He heard something spoken in the other gondola, and whatever it was, it seemed to spur the boatman on to renewed exertions.

The second gondola was rapidly approaching.

Its course was somewhat at right angles with that of the boat in which our friends were.

Should the two keep on, a collision could not be well avoided.

"Hold hard—it is coming!" said the detective.

He was on the watch to see what it all meant, believing there must be something beyond mere plunder beneath this strange attack.

Their gondolier shouted in sudden alarm. He was bidden to get out of the way when it was too late, then came excited voices, and a crash as the two gondolas came together furiously.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD-BY TO VENICE.

This was the supreme moment.

Mr. Grimes knew they must speedily ascertain what was on the programme.

He was the only one who had not been thrown down by the collision.

O'Connor had banged his head against the side of the boat, and was momentarily stunned.

Katy had not been hurt, but as she regained her feet it was to feel a hand clasp her wrist, to see a dark face pressed near her own, and hear a voice whisper hoarsely:

"All is ready, dearest—come!"

Too amazed to speak, O'Connor's wife found herself being half-lifted, and half-dragged toward the canopy of the black gondola.

The two gondoliers were meanwhile sparring at each other with pole and paddle, making the night air hideous with their jargon, uttered in high falsetto voices, furious with anger.

Mr. Grimes, fortunately, was equal to the occasion.

He saw that this daring highwayman was the only one with whom they had to deal.

Amazement held him motionless for the better part of a minute, and during this time the unknown had almost succeeded in getting the dazed Katy on board his boat.

Then the detective took a turn.

When his strong hands fell upon the daring party, one twist of his wrists caused the other to loosen his grasp on Katy.

Another moment, and Mr. Grimes was locked in an embrace with the party.

He expected the latter would try to draw a stiletto, after the custom of a bravo.

To his surprise, his assailant wrestled with him fairly, and in such an ingenious manner that had not the old detective been an expert in this line he must have soon been downed.

As it was, he presently had the other flat on his back in the bottom of the gondola.

Their boatman, dropping his pole, had leaped upon the forward deck of the black gondola, and attacked the rival gondolier.

They were tearing at each other's hair, and wrestling about like tigers, their high voices uttering every epithet the language would admit of.

O'Connor now came up.

He bent over Mr. Grimes' captive.

In spite of the moonlight he could make nothing of the dark face below.

"Fairly beaten, gentlemen, and I deserve all I got for making an ass of myself."

"Hello! what's this—an Italian in looks, an Englishman in voice."

"And a confounded fool in both."

"You are hard on yourself."

"Why not? I have made a beastly mistake, or rather my boatman has for me."

"Ah!"

"I have seen you before somewhere, gentlemen. Let me see—are you not the O'Connor?"

"That is my name."

"Then I owe yourself and wife a thousand apologies. I don't see how you can forgive me, but your own happiness in being wedded must plead for the misery of my cause."

"Who the duse are you?"

Mr. Grimes had removed his iron grasp, and the stranger sat up.

"You remember we were friendly in Paris and later in Rome—I am Lord Chumley."

"Bless my soul! What are you doing here in this atrocious disguise?"

The Englishman sighed.

"Mr. O'Connor, you won a bride. I was trying to do the same, and might have succeeded, only for this unfortunate mistake."

"Let us hear the particulars, my lord. Surely we are entitled to them after this."

"And you shall have the story; but first I want to be assured that I am forgiven for my rudeness toward a lady, Mrs. O'Connor."

"Under the circumstances it was excusable."

"Thanks. Now kindly listen for a few minutes, and all will be made plain. I am sure I have sympathizing friends here, or I would not dare speak of these matters, which concern my heart so fervently. The young lady for whom I have long had a sincere attachment is the second daughter of the Earl of Pemberton, Lady Clare. I am her equal in all respects, but it unfortunately happens that there has long been a sort of vendetta between our families. They have not slain each other, as do our Corsican friends, but each side is bitter, and hates the other most cordially. Thus, you will see, my suit has been frowned upon by the old earl. I have used every honorable means of conquering his antipathy, but without avail. Determined to win my bride, I arranged for an elopement on this night. My boatman was to follow their gondola, and at the proper time and place collide with it. Then Lady Clare was to leap into my arms and we should make haste away. The other gondola would be unable to follow, for the boatman had been bribed to drop his pole overboard, and lose it during the excitement occasioned by the collision. Of course all has been ruined by this unfortunate mistake of my man. Your gondola is a peculiar one—there is, I believe, few like it in Venice, and that used by the earl happens to be one of them. In the confusion on the crowded canal he must have lost track of the other boat, and then, seeing this one, thought it was the same."

"I'm sorry for you, my lord. Perhaps you might find the other boat yet."

"No, it is too late now. I shall have to arrange some other plan. And the worst of it is they leave Venice tomorrow."

"That is too bad."

"I know their route—it is by way of Milan, up through the tunnel into Switzerland, thence to Berlin, where they stop for a long time."

"That is our itinerary."

"Indeed? Then we may see more of each other, for I do not give it up. Foiled by fate in Venice, I may be more successful amid the snow of the Alps, along the beautiful Rhine, or among the strasses of Berlin. An Englishman is pretty much like a bull-dog, you know, tenacious all through."

With that he shook hands all around in a jolly way, and was gone.

They went back to the Venetian hotel where they stopped. This was their last night in Venice.

The day dawned when they were to bid good-by to fair Italy and her mild skies, to brave the more rigorous clime of the Alps.

It was as fine a morning as they could have wished for leaving.

At the railway station they found a pompous looking Briton, traveling with his family and an avalanche of trunks.

In this consequential personage they recognized the Earl of Pemberton, although they had never seen him before in their lives.

Then they amused themselves in picking out Lord Chumley's sweetheart.

It was easily decided that the sweet looking girl, pretty as a picture, demure, and yet with something about her face that spoke of determination, was the Lady Clare whom he worshiped.

"Look!" said Mr. Grimes to Katy, "watch what that fellow yonder, in the garb of a minister, and wearing blue glasses, does. He's been making signals to attract the girl's attention."

The man with the blue glasses sauntered by.

As he passed the girl they had decided was Clare, he suddenly but dextrously slipped a bit of paper from his hand into hers.

"Well done," uttered the critical Mr. Grimes.

"What does it mean?" asked Katy.

"Look at the girl—she has turned her back on the rest, and is perusing the note."

"Yes, yes."

"Her face flushes—she learns why the plan of last night failed, and what the future holds. Her lover is still true—the troubled look has gone. Peace settles upon that fair brow."

"Then the man with the blue glasses——"

"Is our young friend, Chumley."

CHAPTER XV.

LOST IN AN ALPINE STORM.

Mr. Grimes managed it so that they had a compartment to themselves.

He knew all the little tricks of the trade, and could manipulate a guard like wax.

So they started forth.

Venice was left behind.

The same station from which they issued was the terminus of the road from Rome—indeed, the same line was used some miles beyond Padua, when the roads separated, one heading almost due west to Milan, the other south-west, until the Apennines were crossed, and thence south to Florence, and the Eternal City.

If the Gonzales came by rail from Rome on the west coast, or Brindisi on the south-east, the roads joined at Bologna, and the trains must pass over this line from Padua to Venice.

This being the case, there was a slight possibility of their meeting these men.

Until the city of Padua was left behind it was not safe to expose themselves by leaving the train at any station where it might stop.

They made along nicely until Padua was reached. Here a stop was made.

From the windows our friends looked upon the people to be seen.

While O'Connor was watching an excited party of Italians arguing with the guard of a train that had hauled in from the other direction, he was astonished to find himself suddenly drawn backward upon the seat where Gratton was talking with the ladies.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. O'Connor, for what might seem rude, but there was a cause for it," said Mr. Grimes, whose strong arm had been the main reason for this sudden action.

"What was it—some Amazon about to pierce me with a killing look?"

Mr. O'Connor was laughing.

"Come here and look—keep behind this curtain, and see what is beyond. Notice those three men walking together yonder——"

"Jupiter! it's the same old crowd."

"We haven't shaken them off yet, eh?"

"Doesn't seem like it. Do you suppose they suspect we are here?"

"I hardly think they discovered us, but they won't lose many hours following."

"Suppose we open negotiations?"

"Too late for that here. See, they all enter that compartment again. They are bound for Venice."

"That gives us a day's start at least."

"Yes, and we are sure where to locate them. Now, a few tricks on the way will make a blind trail which they may have trouble in following."

"Well, the train is gone."

"That danger has passed, thank goodness."

Milan was reached about dark, for this was not a lightning or limited express.

They continued on.

Plans were altered a little, for Lord Chumley came in and told them what he knew of the line marked out by the earl's party.

At a certain town near the foot of the Alps the train was left, after passing through the tunnel.

Here guides were secured.

The Alps were to be ascended.

By this time our party had made the acquaintance of the earl's family.

They all set out together.

Guides were taken, one for each member of the party, for the way was exceedingly rough, and there were times when assistance became an absolute necessity.

Besides, the guides carried the food, and all extra wraps for the ladies.

Thus they climbed upward.

The snow-clad tops of the Alps seemed to almost reach the heavens above.

There is always danger in this undertaking, and they were warned even now that it was possible they might meet a snow-storm, but the Englishman was determined—weather never kept him from accomplishing anything which he set about to perform, and so they went.

Having started at noon, that evening they put up at the house of the Good Fathers, which had been made a sort of inn of late years, a half-way house for travelers bound up or down.

Just at dark another traveler arrived.

Mr. Grimes and O'Connor were smoking, and watching the shadows sweep over the valley spread out before them.

"Ah," said the former, "he has come. I felt sure he would be along."

"Who?" asked O'Connor, startled, for his mind went immediately to the league of seven.

"Chumley."

Sure enough, when O'Connor turned he saw the same party with the ministerial look and colored glasses alighting from his mule while his guide held the animal's head.

Chumley was still on the trail.

He had said that if he failed to secure his end among the orange trees of sunny Italy he might accomplish it along the snow-clad Alps.

Who could tell?

Morning came.

All was bustle and confusion, for the large party was getting started.

Soon they stretched out along the route leading up the mountain.

They had come a long distance out of their way to ascend this great mountain that stands so near the junction of France, Italy, and Switzerland.

Mount Blanc and the Matterhorn have become famous in history, and many a romance has been written founded upon their terrors.

As our friends ascended higher objects down in the romantic Vale of Chamounix assumed a diminutive appearance.

At the same time those above grew bolder and their natural size was made apparent.

During the whole morning they climbed upward.

After dinner it was decided to keep on to a point above, where they could spend an hour or so surveying the grand scene.

The descent would take only half the time consumed in climbing the mountain.

At length they reached the spot.

Some time was spent here.

The guides became nervous.

One of them explained that there were signs in the air of a snow-storm, and was horrified at the earl's cool declaration that it would be a fine sight to witness from the base of the Matterhorn.

However, on the ladies' account they decided to descend, and a start was made.

They straggled down the mountain side.

Each had a guide.

Lady Clare lingered until the last.

The expected storm caught them half-way down.

The air turned suddenly cold, the sky was blotted out, and down swept the snow.

Still the guides knew the way.

For better protection they called to the party to close up, and those in the lead waited until the others reached them.

Then, with the best guide ahead, they began the perilous descent.

They were about two-thirds of the way down when the earl suddenly cried out:

"By Jove! has any one seen Clare?"

No one had.

A feeling of alarm spread over the party.

The last seen of her she was still at the top, surveying the wonderful picture below.

It was awful to think of.

A rescuing party was immediately formed, and Mr. Grimes took charge of it.

He was not at all surprised to find at his side the man with the blue glasses.

Where Lord Chumley had come from no one could even guess, but there he was, eager to risk his own life in the effort to save Clare.

CHAPTER XVI.

FATE TAKES A HAND IN THE GAME.

The situation was alarming.

They struggled upward in the face of the storm, but already Mr. Grimes doubted their chances of finding the lost one.

Colder it grew as they ascended.

Already the snow was becoming deep, so heavily did it fall.

They had four guides, the best of the lot.

These were spurred on by the incentive of rich rewards offered by the tourists.

Up to a certain point this would hold good, but beyond that it would fail.

Mounting such a height is tiresome even during fine weather, and when such a storm is raging the sturdiest of men must make but slow progress.

The guides were accustomed to it, and stolidly bowed their heads to the gale.

Our two friends kept up with them.

Enthusiasm spurred one on, love drew the other.

Mr. Grimes was past the middle age, however, and he had hard work keeping up with the sturdy young Englishman.

Wilder grew the awful storm.

Left to themselves, the two men would never have been able to have found the way.

Even the guides had to be careful lest they reach some terrible precipice half hidden in the dazzling snow-drifts.

At length a halt was called.

"What's up?" asked Mr. Grimes, reaching the others, who had been a little ahead.

"They say the path divides here, to unite farther up the mountain."

"Yes?"

"It is possible for those descending to take either path—it's a mere matter of choice."

"Well?"

"If we take the wrong one we may miss them."

"That is easily settled. You take the right, while I have the left—choose your guides."

"A thousand thanks. The paths are not very far apart. Have you a revolver?"

"Certainly."

"Then if you find her, fire several shots, and we will meet down here."

"It is understood that you do the same?"

"Yes. Good-by, and Heaven grant that one of us is successful."

Young Chumley picked out two of the guides and started off.

Mr. Grimes, with the others, followed suit, up the other path to the left.

When they were two-thirds of the way up to the level, where the paths met again, farther progress was barred.

An avalanche of snow and rocks had swept past the spot, and even the most daring and skillful Alpine climber could not have ascended.

Nothing could be done but descend, and wait at the rendezvous for the other party.

Meanwhile Lord Chumley and his guides continued to push upward.

The path there was well defined, as it lay in a sort of defile. Here the snow drifted.

In places it was above their waists, and not having been packed, gave way beneath them, so that the labor was very hard.

Ordinary endurance could not stand much more.

It was not at all surprising, therefore, that the two guides finally came to a halt under a sheltering rock, and sat down.

They would go no farther.

To do so was certain death, they declared.

In vain the Englishman sought to induce them.

"I will double the rewards already offered."

The men had reached the limit.

They shook their heads stubbornly.

Lord Chumley saw the case was desperate.

"I am going on. Perhaps I may save her. Give me a flask of liquor, and wait here as long as you dare."

He was gone.

Near the top of the defile he saw something move.

Another moment, and he came face to face with one of the Swiss guides from the chalet below.

He recognized the fellow as the man who had had charge of Lady Clare.

To his amazement and horror he was alone.

Sternly he clutched the man's arm.

"Where is the lady?" he roared.

The guide pointed above.

"Not far away—she could go no farther. I left her under the shelter of some rocks while I went for help," said the man, wincing under the other's fierce clutch and the flash of his eyes.

"You scoundrel, rather say you deserted her to her fate. If she perishes I'll have your miserable life for it. Quick! describe the exact spot where you left her."

The guide did so, trying to excuse himself at the same time.

"Go below. You will find the others. Try and lead them to the place."

With these last words he flung the man from him, and once more set off up the defile.

At last he received an electric shock.

There, on his right, he sighted the ledge spoken of by the guide.

Then his eyes fell upon something.

It was Clare, bundled up in her wraps, which, however, were all too thin for this bitter atmosphere.

Another moment and he was at her side.

She looked up.

His glasses had long since fallen from his eyes and dangled at the end of their cord.

Clare recognized him.

She gave a cry of joy, and was immediately wrapped in his embrace.

There, in the midst of that howling Alpine gale, those two loving hearts were united.

Chumley saw that she was cold.

He took off his coat, and fastened it about her, despite her entreaties.

Then he walked up and down with her under the shelter of the rocks, now and then breaking into a run to stir up the circulation.

Anything to keep their blood warm.

He pretended to be gay, but all the while suffered tortures of unrest.

What if no one should come?

A night spent here would be fatal, as there was no means of lighting a fire.

But Heaven was kind.

Before an hour had passed there was an answer to the shot Lord Chumley fired.

The storm was ceasing also.

Soon Mr. Grimes and the guides came in view, and a loud shout went up.

They were saved.

An hour after dusk they entered the chalet of the Good Fathers, half way down the mountain, to be received noisily by all.

Lady Clare was wrapped in the arms of her mother, while her father tenderly kissed her.

"One man saved her, you say, Mr. Grimes? Where is he? Let him ask what he will," exclaimed the earl, with some show of feeling.

Mr. Grimes beckoned.

The seeming minister with the blue glasses approached in a modest manner.

Now was the accepted time.

Strike while the iron was hot—that was the idea with the shrewd detective.

"This is the man, my lord."

"My good sir, I understand that my child, doubtless, owes her life to you—that only for your perseverance the guides would have given up the hunt—that you even took off your coat and kept her warm with it. Such noble action makes me proud to know you. Ask your own reward."

He held out his hand.

Chumley looked toward Clare, who glided to his side immediately.

"You have given your word, Earl Pemberton. I hold your hand offered in friendship. In the name of Heaven let the unseemly feud between two noble families be ended here. I have won Clare—let me have her."

The blue glasses fell.

"What! Lord Chumley!"

The earl tried to withdraw his hand, but on second thought smiled.

He knew he was beaten.

"Let it be so. Heaven has decided. From this time on the past is wiped out."

Mr. Grimes gave a Yankee hurrah.

He said that but for his years he would have thrown his hat up into the air.

And so that little romance was settled in a manner highly satisfactory to all parties, so that even the unusual Alpine storm brought good in its train.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PLOTTERS OF BERLIN.

On the following day our friends parted from the English party.

The next stop on their journey north to the region of the White Czar was Berlin.

To reach the capital of the German Empire they pursued a devious course.

All sorts of conveyances were brought into play with the one object in view, to baffle those whom they knew were behind them.

They made a zigzag journey.

At Berne, in Switzerland, they spent a day.

Then they were off to Strasburg.

From this point they went down the Rhine bound for Cologne, but on the way changed their minds, and got out at Bingen.

Soon after they turned up in Frankfort.

From this point they traveled by railroad and vehicles as suited their fancy.

One fine morning they turned up in Dresden, where they were interested in the making of the china that has made the city famous.

From here they skipped to Leipsic.

They were now drawing near the capital of the great German nation.

It was a time momentous in the history of that Fatherland, for with the old emperor dead, and Frederick dying, it looked as though the foundations were shaking.

Socialists were active.

Every day witnessed arrests of the discontented classes.

In one country they are known as Nihilists, in another Socialists, a third as Communists, and over here we call them Anarchists.

Though differing radically in their ways in one sense these elements are united.

They hate the powers that be, and would bring about an upheaval of society by fire and the sword if necessary.

Lack of numerical strength is the only thing that keeps them down.

Germany is honey-combed with these secret societies, and at any time the whole nation may be convulsed in the throes of a domestic strife.

In more than one city keen-eyed Mr. Grimes saw evidences of this secret plotting.

More than one thing told him that these firebrands were undergoing some unusual excitement, and, no doubt, this would be more particularly the case in the German capital.

How they came to be mixed up in the terrible schemes of these plotters it shall be our duty to chronicle as speedily as possible.

Remembering all the annoyances to which they had been subjected in the past on account of their wealth, it was decided to make as little show as possible.

In America they could have assumed names, and thus covered their tracks, without any great trouble, but here in Germany such a thing, if known to the police, would immediately excite the greatest suspicion as to their motives.

Still, once in Berlin, Mr. Grimes thought they might at least be left alone.

O'Connor registered as Mr. R. Concord and lady, of London, while his friend was T. Grafton, from the good city of Dublin.

Mr. Grimes, for this appearance only, became Oliver Grooms.

There was just enough change to throw a searcher off the track, and yet enough of the original retained to serve them in case the German police chose to investigate.

This being done, and their appearance somewhat altered without any actual disguise being assumed, they set out to see Berlin.

There was much, indeed, to be seen.

As might seem natural, the quarter where royalty held forth attracted them above all else.

They loitered around here considerably in their desire to see Prince Bismarck.

Generally the Iron Chancellor can be seen about every day.

Just at this critical time, however, it happened that the Socialist wasp was unusually active, for it looked as though a tremendous crisis was about to come upon Germany, and some of the hot heads among the secret plotters hoped to gain a point by assassinating Bismarck at about the hour Emperor Frederick died.

Thus the nation would be without a helm, for at that time few imagined young William possessed the traits he has since developed.

Berlin was not very gay.

The people had loved the old emperor deeply, and mourned his death.

Then again they knew Frederick, his son, was slowly but surely passing from them under the influence of a dread disease.

Nor was this all.

There was a certain feverish state of the public pulse. It was suspected in many quarters that plots were being formed aimed at the heart of the nation.

Some declared secret messengers from France were in the city, stirring up the hatred of these discordant elements, and a fearful catastrophe might be the result.

No wonder the secret police of Germany were excited to their best endeavors.

The very air of Berlin seemed charged with conspiracy and dark plottings.

Sometimes the fate of a nation depends upon a mere accident.

Small beginnings often bring about the greatest events the world has seen.

It chanced, without any intention on his part, that Mr. Grimes in his new make-up strangely resembled another man.

That other man was expected to be in Berlin on a certain day, and while riding along the beautiful avenue named Under der Linden to take off his hat and mop his brow while passing a certain monument.

Mr. Grimes, leaving the rest of the party at the hotel, was on his way to a certain spot, where he designed seeing a review that was to take place—nothing of particular consequence, though he would get an idea of the wonderful precision that marked the German soldiers.

The day was warm.

He used his handkerchief to wipe his forehead, removing his hat also.

It happened—the strangest things in the whole world are those that come by chance—that at the time he was passing a statue.

There was a hail from the pavement.

A man held up his hand, and the driver of the carriage immediately pulled up.

To the surprise of Mr. Grimes this party walked out, and without as much as "by your leave" entered the carriage, and sat beside him.

The driver, believing this was one of his employer's friends, went on.

He was a stolid looking fellow.

Mr. Grimes at first thought that this party who so coolly entered his carriage was a secret member of the German police force.

He wondered what was up.

At the same time, with his natural coolness, he resolved to take things as they came.

His surprise was increased when the fellow squeezed his hand, but he returned the pressure in the same peculiar way, believing it might be the grip of some secret society.

Mr. Grimes was always in for an adventure, and never let a chance go by to improve the shining opportunity.

The man spoke to him, to his surprise, in French, which, of course, the driver could not understand.

Mr. Grimes was a fair French scholar, though he never made any boast of it.

He could readily carry on a conversation with any one.

"So you have arrived?" asked the other.

"Yes, I have arrived."

"I have looked for you three days, always at the appointed time and place."

"Indeed?"

Not yet having an inkling of the game, the detective was non-committal.

"When you made the signal with your handkerchief I recognized you from the description sent me by the chief."

Mr. Grimes thought that odd, but, of course, he did not say so, merely remarking:

"So far all is well."

"Yes, everything works like clock-work. How about this driver—have you tried him to see if he understands French?"

"No, but I will. I say, driver, here is a little present I wish to make you."

This was said without raising his voice.

Had the driver understood it would have been seemingly impossible for him to have failed in showing some little emotion at least.

The Teuton seemed as imperturbable as the Sphinx Mr. Grimes had so carefully examined in the region of the Nile.

Of course he did not understand a word of what his passengers were saying.

"That settles it," said Mr. Grimes.

"Yes, we are safe, and can talk as we please. Have you seen him yet?"

"Who?"

"Why, the man of all others you and I are interested in just now—Prince Bismarck."

"I have not seen him."

"He keeps pretty close nowadays, as if there was something in the air he did not like. Aha! the weather grows worse to him," and the man emitted a chuckle of evident satisfaction.

Mr. Grimes began to smell a rat.

He no longer believed this unknown to be an emissary of the secret police, but a member of some circle of plotters against the government.

These things are always going on in countries governed by more or less despotic rulers.

"See here, Steinwalder," said the man, in a low tone, looking cautiously around, "bend your head close to me. One question, comrade—did you bring *it* along with you over the border?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SHADOW OF A GREAT CONSPIRACY.

Now, Mr. Grimes had no more idea of what was meant by the word *it* than the man in the moon might.

He was not the one to expose his ignorance, and besides he might give a shrewd guess.

Assuming a look of conscious importance, he smiled and turned to his companion.

"Do not worry on that score—all is well."

"You give me confidence. Shrewd as they are, their eyes are blind as bats when they try to catch us asleep. Before the snow flies again the doom of the Hohenzollerns will have descended."

Mr. Grimes' suspicions were strengthened.

He believed he could venture on a faint move or so himself now.

"This is a grand piece of business, comrade. We should be proud of our humble share in it."

"Humble! Ah! friend, I believe our part is the most difficult of all, but it is the one where the honor lies. The hand that sends the Iron Chancellor to his long rest the people will bless. Even if we fall, our names will go down to posterity as heroes, who died for the sake of liberty."

With every passing minute Mr. Grimes was getting a better knowledge of the facts.

Already he knew there was a dreadful conspiracy on foot to murder Bismarck.

How far it extended—that was what must be found out ere it was too late.

Fortune had cast her favors upon him, and brought him face to face with this affair.

He determined upon his course.

This was to find out all he could of the matter from this fellow-conspirator, and then communicate with the German authorities.

"What you say is true, friend. By what name are you known here"

"Waldeck. They think I came from the North. Some day that name will be to Germany what Robespierre is to France."

"Let us hope so. You spoke of that which I was to bring with me over the border. In what shape did you expect me to carry it?"

The other looked at him, and laughed.

"There are many ways. See that boot—it has a hollow heel, where I carry papers and defy search. When I want them I merely tap my own boots."

"Very shrewd. I have something here as good. Do you see this walking stick? It is an innocent looking affair, and yet it holds the power to remove the greatest tyrant of all Europe."

The other moved uneasily.

"Do you mean it is hollow, and that it contains the powerful explosive?"

"True. The handle turns so, and the tube is filled from the top, you see."

"But, man alive, what if you should drop it?"

Mr. Grimes shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, comrade, neither you nor I would know what had become of us—there is some satisfaction in that fact, you see."

"But I—the cause would suffer. It is very dear to me, and hence I value my life. I beg that you will be exceedingly careful how you handle that cane. Do not strike it against anything."

"It would take more than a slight blow to accomplish the result. See, I can strike it so."

To the horror of the man beside him, Mr. Grimes rapped the cane quite roundly on the carriage step.

"For Heaven's sake desist!"

"Certainly, Monsieur Waldeck. I did not intend to make you feel nervous, but, you see, I have the thing down to a fine point, and know what force it will take to send this little demon out."

This was all very fine, considering that the cane in question was a solid one, the top of which happened to be a trifle loose.

There is nothing like having a good imagination under such circumstances.

When a yarn is to be invented it might as well be made out of whole cloth.

"How far have your arrangements gone?" he asked the other.

"I am acting under the orders received from the Grand Central Council of Three."

"Certainly."

"There has been secured a house on this strasse near where I met you. When your attempt is made it is to be in that place. Should it fail through any cause I am to do my part—he shall not escape."

"And that part?"

"I have two double-barrel guns there, heavily loaded with buckshot.

"Thus four hail-storms of lead will mow him down.

"They may surround the house, and kill me, but what care I for that? A man can die but once, and may as well in a good cause."

"Point out the house to me when we pass it. I shall tell my driver to turn. You see, I pretended to be interested in the maneuvers of the troops, and on the way there, if you did not answer my signal."

He spoke a few words in German to the stolid driver, and the vehicle was turned around. As they rode along they came to the plain looking building where the old emperor had lived so many years.

There is a certain window, dear to the good people of Berlin, for in it every day the white-whiskered Emperor William used to sit and respond to the respectful enthusiasm of the passing crowd.

Many have seen him in that window.

"Look," said Waldeck, "the emperor's window yonder Some one is at it. Do you recognize him?"

A stout figure, a heavy face, with gray mustache, a half-military garb, and round cap with a peak.

"It is Bismarck himself."

"Yes, curses on him!"

"Careful, comrade. The police are vigilant these days. A word will ruin all."

"You are right, Steinwalder. I must make my salutation like the rest to avoid suspicion, but what a mockery it is. If he could only read the dark thoughts that run riot in this mind of mine at sight of him."

Mr. Grimes laughed.

"You would feel the power of the police in less than ten minutes, Waldeck."

"Of course. But the time is short. When the news of Frederick's death comes, the first time Bismarck appears upon the street the game is to be let loose all along the lines."

It was wonderful how much information Mr. Grimes had picked up.

Half an hour before he had not dreamed that such a thing existed as a conspiracy against the throne—now he was head over ears involved in it—the very man, it seemed, appointed to make way with the great chancellor.

He had marked the house which Waldeck maintained as having been secured by the conspriators for their operations.

It could readily be found again.

He continued to talk with this man for some time, and so cautious was the detective with regard to what he said that he did not seem to arouse the faintest suspicion in the other's mind.

Then Waldeck said he would leave him.

"Where are you stopping, Steinwalder?"

Mr. Grimes named his hotel.

"I have taken an excellent disguise—that of an American. You know I spent some time over there, and am familiar with their ways. I have fastened on to a party, and they screen me without ever dreaming of what I am."

"Ah! you are shrewd. This time, I believe, we shall be successful. Germany shall be freed from the yoke of tyranny that encircles her neck."

With a few parting words Waldeck got out of the carriage, and joined the sauntering crowd.

Mr. Grimes ordered the driver, in German, to return to the hotel at once.

He desired to think over the matter, and perhaps get the advice of O'Connor.

It was a grave problem.

To handle it without gloves might mean severe trouble, and perhaps death to him.

They reached the hotel.

As he paid the driver he said:

"Remain here. I shall probably want your vehicle, inside of an hour. Do you know where the police headquarters of Berlin are?"

The German Sphinx nodded his head.

Mr. Grimes saw a furtive gleam in his pig-like eyes, but with the great weight resting on his mind he paid no attention to this fact.

CHAPTER XIX.

"I WILL SEE TO THAT, MYNHEER."

The Irish Monte Cristo had been with the ladies during the hour Mr. Grimes spent in the company of the Socialist.

Here the detective found him.

Awaiting his opportunity, he gave the other a private signal, which he understood.

He followed Mr. Grimes into an anteroom.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing to alarm you, sir, but I wanted to ask your advice."

"How can I aid you?"

"You know something about the pain of dying—not that you ever experienced the sensation personally, but I believe you once studied for a doctor and experimented considerably. Can you tell me which would probably be the easier death, strangulation by the cord or death from a dagger?"

"The duse! I really don't know. This is a singular question to put to me."

"I mean it."

"Then, on the whole, I'd take—no, I'm not sure but what it would be just as well to toss up and let fate decide it."

"Ah! that relieves me of a load. I was in a quandary as to what I should do."

"Why do you ask such a question?"

"Because I am threatened with a choice of these two evils, Mr. O'Connor. The danger of the knife comes from a secret council of extreme Socialists, while the peril of the rope emanates from the strong arm of the German government."

"Mr. Grimes, if I did not know you so well I should really say that you had been drinking."

"Ah!"

"You left me an hour ago for a ride. All was peaceful and serene. You return. I am summoned to a secret confab. You tell me that in that quiet drive events have occurred that puts your life in danger—on the one side from anarchists, on the other from the arm of German law."

"Exactly."

"You appear perfectly rational."

"Never was more so in my life."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, explain to me what you have done to thus doubly imperil your life."

Mr. Grimes bent forward.

In a thrilling tone he said:

"I have undertaken a contract, O'Connor."

"A contract?"

"Ay, and which, if carried out, would inflame all of Europe in a terrible war."

"That is a serious contract, Mr. Grimes. As we are traveling together, and each is in a measure responsible for the other, suppose you tell me the nature of this awful contract."

"Willingly."

Mr. Grimes looked around him after the manner of a genuine conspirator.

"The contract I have undertaken to perform is to remove a certain man."

"Dangerous work in this country."

"That man stands high in rank, not only in Germany but in the world."

"My soul, Mr. Grimes, can you mean——"

"The illustrious Prince Bismarck."

"Mr. Grimes, you have got a story to tell?"

"Yes, indeed, and it will harrow up your blood, too, I'm positive, my dear O'Connor."

"Then for pity's sake tell me about it, so that I may not believe you gone mad."

"Then hark."

Now that he had reached this point, Mr. Grimes dallied no longer, or kept the other in suspense.

In a concise manner he gave the full details of the extraordinary adventure that had befallen him since leaving to see the review.

Possibly no stranger within the gates of Berlin had ever before been made the victim of such an astounding episode—certainly not within the recollection of the old detective officer.

He went from the beginning to the end.

O'Connor sat and listened.

Not once did he vouchsafe a word. He was so entranced that not for worlds would he have brought about an interruption.

At length all was told.

O'Connor was electrified.

"Indeed, this beats anything I ever heard. I shall never again rail at the workings of fate. To think of your being taken for one of the conspirators, giving the signal, looking like the Steinwalder who is expected from France bearing the explosive destined to finish the chancellor."

"It is a strange combination."

"To me it seems as though the hand of Heaven must be back of it all, else such a series of fortunate events could never have occurred."

"Some men bear charmed lives. I reckon the great Bismarck must be one of them. Imagine, if you will, the hundreds of men in Germany who bear him hatred. Some of them must be desperate cases, too. Yet they have not dared up to this time to make an attempt upon his life. I do not say conspiracies have been lacking, but they have been found out, and the plotters punished in secret."

"What are you going to do about it?"

Mr. Grimes looked thoughtful.

Well he might.

It was a grave business that demanded his attention just now.

"That I must consider. I want to make no mistake about this thing."

"Do you think it possible to carry out the deception, and learn all their secrets?"

"Yes."

"The risk would be terrible."

"I am not so much afraid of the danger from that source as from the other."

"The government?"

"Yes; they have a way of dealing with prisoners here and in Russia that is pretty hard on an innocent man. Caught apparently in the act, trial is deemed a farce, and one is bundled off to a deep dungeon, from whence he never emerges—his fate ever remains a mystery to his friends, for they do not know whether he has fallen into the Elbe or the Oder, or been put out of the way by hired assassins."

"Then I would take no chances."

"It is better not."

"You can communicate with the police."

"I shall try. For that purpose I gave orders that the carriage remain at the door."

"Then you go to headquarters?"

"Yes."

"You may not be granted an interview."

"Ah! depend upon me to get that. I shall send in a note that will open their eyes."

"Then write it here."

"Why not? I see pen, ink, and paper handy. The sooner I am in league with the German police the less chance I run of ending my life by the rope. Here, you are a better German scholar than I. Suppose you write while I gather my wits about me for the effort."

"Agreed."

O'Connor sat down.

Drawing a piece of paper to him, he proceeded to write the date upon the top.

"Now I am ready, Mr. Grimes."

"Ah! let me see. Suppose you direct it to the Superintendent of Police. I don't exactly remember what title they give him over here, but that doesn't signify."

"Not a bit."

"Have you done that?"

"Yes."

"The writer, an American detective, traveling for pleasure through Europe——"

"Good. Go on."

"Has, by a series of strange circumstances, come into possession of certain knowledge——"

"Splendid—proceed."

"Concerning a terrible conspiracy now well advanced, which has for its object——"

"Yes."

"The sudden and simultaneous removal of Prince Bismarck, young Wilhelm, and others in command of the army."

"Is that all?"

"As this plot may culminate at any hour—the death of Frederick being the signal agreed upon by the secret council——"

"Yes."

"It would be wise to grant an immediate—underscore that word heavily—interview, so that the full particulars of the plot, and how strangely it came into the writer's possession, may be placed in your hands."

"Well?"

"Have you that all down?"

"Yes."

"Read it."

The Irish Monte Cristo did so, in English.

"It could not be bettered."

"I do not think so, Mr. Grimes."

"Then sign my name, or, here, let me do it."

He took the pen and wrote:

"Obed Grimes,
"With Redmond O'Connor, Esq.,
"—— Hotel, Berlin."

"There, I think when that letter is placed in the hands of the chief of police it will open his eyes. Probably he will want to work the game so as to get the credit of the whole affair with his sovereign, but I care nothing about that."

"One thing now, Mr. Grimes."

"Eh?"

"Tell me how you expect to place that letter in the hands of the chief of police?"

"I will see to that, mynheer," said a quiet voice behind.

Both men whirled around.

CHAPTER XX.

THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE GERMAN POLICE.

What did they see?

A few minutes ago, when they looked around, both would have been ready to have sworn that the little ante-writing-room was empty, except for themselves.

Now this was not so.

A man stood there.

Mr. Grimes at once recognized him.

It was the driver of the vehicle—the open carriage in which he had started for the review.

The man's stolid face had assumed a cunning expression, and he held his hand out as if expecting to receive the paper.

For once Mr. Grimes had been caught napping.

Who was this man?

Taking a step toward him he demanded:

"What do you want in here?"

"I thought I would be needed."

"That is a very elastic imagination of yours. Stay," as a sudden thought came into his mind, "you speak French, do you not?"

"Oui, monsieur."

"You must have overheard our conversation in the carriage, you wretch."

"Certainly."

"Every word of it?"

"My ears are very good."

"You are no common stupid driver."

"Monsieur is flattering."

"No, you are either one of two things—a member of the secret council to which Waldeck belongs or else one of the German detectives."

The stout, red-faced Teuton shrugged his shoulders in a very Frenchy way.

"Which would you think?"

"The latter. You are a police spy."

"Exactly. If mynheer will drive with me to headquarters they will tell you who Werner is."

Mr. Grimes and O'Connor exchanged glances.

"The game grows more interesting."

"Yes, indeed. You will go with me, Mr. O'Connor?"

"Certainly. We have time before dark."

Turning again to the German, Mr. Grimes said:

"Do you understand my connection with this case?"

The other nodded his head.

"Mynheer does not give the Berlin police force the credit due to them. You may think it beyond reason, but even in the selection of this disguise you were influenced as you may never know."

"The duse! I am beginning to believe a man may pick up some fine points over here. Then it is already known at headquarters that there is a conspiracy against the prince?"

"Oh! yes. We have a complete list of those engaged in the business. The man you rode with, mynheer, Waldeck, he is the traitor."

"You knew that a man was coming by the name of Steinwalder?"

"Yes. But if you seek more information you must look to my superior for it."

"Shall we go now?"

"The office of police is under the eyes of these scoundrels. I can take you there in a secret way when you are ready."

"We can go now."

"Bring that letter. I should like the chief to see that your hearts were right for Germany, even before you knew you were watched."

"A thousand thanks."

The three went out.

Entering the carriage they were driven some little distance down the avenue.

Then the driver left his horses tied.

He led the way through a quiet strasse, until he came to a private house.

Entering here—it was in flats—he led them up to the third floor.

They followed him along a narrow hall.

At the end of this dark passage he opened a door, and ushered them into a room which seemed to be in a different building—one that faced on another street entirely.

It was the office of justice.

Mr. Grimes recognized it instantly as the room of a man who was at the head of the police force.

Seated at a desk was a man.

In him Mr. Grimes believed he saw the autocrat of the German police circles.

He was right.

Their conductor bent over and talked rapidly in a low voice with the other.

Once or twice this gentleman glanced in the direction of our two friends, as though he were interested in the recital.

Mr. Grimes was looking about with interest.

He meant to make the most of this strange chance that had given him the entree to the office of the German head of police.

Presently the detective officer came and touched him on the arm.

"Herr Grimes, would you kindly step this way, and have a little chat?"

When Mr. Grimes moved away the officer engaged O'Connor in conversation.

Reaching the desk of the august head of police circles in the empire, Mr. Grimes saw a hand extended to him.

He took hold of it.

"Be seated, please."

Mr. Grimes was asked a number of questions, to which the great detective replied in a straightforward manner.

It was easy to be seen that his ways pleased the police superintendent immensely.

Presently he ceased asking questions.

"If there is anything you would like to ask, Herr Grimes, now is the time."

"I am curious on one point, because it has much to do with my future actions."

"Say on."

"Where is Steinwalder? He started from Paris. He should have given the signal on the Avenue of Lindens three days ago."

The superintendent smiled.

"Steinwalder is in our hands."

"But even the traitor Waldeck did not know this, or he would not have mistaken me."

"Waldeck does not know. It was our intention to fill in the gap with a man of our own. We were looking for a Steinwalder when you came along, and you resembled him in so many ways that we determined to see if through some influence you could not be made to take the place of the man in the dungeon."

"Fortune favored your plan in many ways."

"It always does," with a smile.

"My wiping my forehead at the right time was purely an accident."

"Do you think so. Werner, there, can tell you that he kept on the sunny side of the street, where the heat was strong in spite of the lindens."

"Ah! then he had a hand in it. At any rate, I was drawn into the game, and I think I played it to the satisfaction of Herr Waldeck."

"Entirely. I have his word for that."

"Ah! was he here?"

"He quitted the room not ten minutes before you came, having sought me to report immediately upon leaving your carriage."

"I admire Herr Waldeck's promptness, even though I detest his occupation."

"Herr Grimes, would you do Prince Bismarck a favor?" asked the chief of police.

"Yes, upon one condition."

"What is that?"

"Let Prince Bismarck ask it of me personally," he said, to the chief of police.

The German officer smiled.

"It can be arranged."

He touched a bell.

A man immediately entered.

"Gruber, send word to Prince Bismarck that I am coming to him for an interview. Let me see, it is now five, say six sharp, if it will be convenient to his highness. Business of the utmost importance demands it."

The man bowed and retired.

Again the conversation was resumed.

They talked of plans whereby the deceit might be kept up by the bogus Steinwalder.

From the man in the dungeon various papers had been taken, and the information regarding the pass-words, grips, and signals in use among the members of the secret cicle would be of the utmost value to Mr. Grimes in case he agreed to play the part fate had forced upon him.

It was all interesting to him.

For years this had been his business, and he lived in such details.

They had been talking only about five minutes when a knock came on the door.

"Enter."

The man called Gruber appeared and saluted.

"What do you report?"

"His highness will await you at six."

"It is well."

The man turned and walked out of the door with the precision of an animated ramrod.

"Return to your hotel, Herr Grimes, and take an early dinner. At a quarter to six exactly I will call for you. We must not keep the prince waiting."

"I admire your punctual ways—they accord with my own. I will be ready."

So they left the office of the director of police, and went down the same way they had come up, reaching their carriage near by.

CHAPTER XXI.

AS A FAVOR TO BISMARCK.

At the appointed time the chief of police called upon Mr. Grimes.

The ride was uneventful.

With considerable forethought the chief of police had brought a close vehicle.

This was on Mr. Grimes' account.

Should any of the members of the secret council see the man they believed to be their comrade Steinwalder riding with the dreaded director of police down the beautiful avenue called Under der Linden, it was more than possible that the American's usefulness in the role he meant to play would be permanently destroyed, and perhaps he himself meet with a sudden and terrible fate.

They arrived at their destination.

It lacked two minutes of six.

Such a military way of doing things pleased Mr. Grimes very much.

He found the prince in a room plainly furnished, awaiting the chief.

The latter spoke with him for some time, no doubt telling all Mr. Grimes' connection with the great conspiracy, and what a glorious opportunity he had of getting hold of information which, up to this time, had managed to elude the grasp of the German secret police.

"Herr Grimes, step this way, please."

Another moment, and the American was shaking hands with the man he believed to be the greatest in all the wide world.

Knowing his place, the chief of police walked over to a window, leaving the others alone.

There is no need of giving the interview between Prince Bismarck and Mr. Grimes in detail.

It is sufficient to know that the American had his wish fulfilled. He was asked as a favor by this greatest of living men to undertake the task the chief of police proposed.

He willingly accepted.

Then Prince Bismarck thanked him heartily, and had some pleasant words to say of the great young giant across the sea, who yearly grew in power, and promised to be a leading factor in the progress of the world, if, indeed, Uncle Sam was not to-day filling that position.

Then the interview was over.

The chief of police must have received some secret signal, for he came up at this juncture, and whispered a few words in Mr. Grimes' ear.

Then the American insisted on shaking hands with the grim old warrior again, just as he would have done with a friend on the street.

They went out.

Mr. Grimes was enlisted in the cause.

He hoped the action would be short and sharp as well as decisive, for he did not want to be kept in Berlin any longer than necessary.

Again they entered the closed carriage.

The ride back was roundabout and slow, for the head of the police had much to say.

Evidently his plans were all arranged.

The plotters against the government were all to be caged at once.

Mr. Grimes would be given one day and night to learn what he could, and see whether the disclosures of the traitor Waldeck were true.

Then the lines would be drawn taut.

Word would spread through Berlin on the following day that the emperor was dead.

This must bring the plans of the secret council to a sudden forward movement, and when this was undertaken they would walk into the trap set for them by the ingenious chief of police.

What these various pitfalls were Mr. Grimes now learned, and he discovered, with pleasure, how far-reaching this German system of police was.

Every point was covered.

Not one man could escape.

The game had been perfectly arranged, and all that was needed now was a finger to press the trigger when the thing was done.

At last Mr. Grimes left the vehicle.

He was put down in front of his hotel.

There the matter ended so far as his connection with the great Bismarck was concerned.

He had his plan mapped out.

The head of the police had in a measure arranged this for him, so that he could see just what work lay before him.

O'Connor, of course, was anxious to know how he had come along, and took the first favorable opportunity to corner the old man.

Mr. Grimes, knowing the discretion of his friend, had nothing to conceal.

He told it all.

Of course the Irish Monte Cristo was deeply interested in the whole affair.

If he could not have a hand in it himself, at least he might follow the fortunes of his friend.

Anything he could do to expedite matters the other could cheerfully count upon.

Just as if Mr. Grimes did not know that before.

"There is only one thing worries me, O'Connor."

"And that?"

"I worry lest our pursuers may overtake us while I am wrapped up in the mazes of this wonderful conspiracy against the German powers that be."

"Well, let them come. Gratton and myself are no chickens. We beat them in the start, and they will have to prove good generals to get the drop on us now."

"Keep together as much as possible to-morrow."

"All right."

"I expect to be free in two days. Then we can make a bee line for Russia."

"Be easy about us, sir. If the Gonzales make their appearance in Berlin we may have some fun with them. How would it do to get the whole gang interested in this conspiracy. I'm thinking that they'd bother us no more once they saw the inside of a German dungeon."

Mr. Grimes laughed.

"Wait; we won't try that on here. I have a neat little plan, which can be put in practice over in Russia. First of all we will try to compromise on the little sun-god. If that fails, I give you my word that I not only make Nihilists out of those seven Gonzales, but that I throw them into the hands of the police with evidence enough on their persons to send them off, bag and baggage, to Siberia, where, in the salt mines, they will have a chance to interview some of the greatest men the land of the White Czar has produced, and some of the most unfortunate, too, I reckon."

"We can't count on seeing you again, then, until this little affair blows over?"

"I presume not. From this hour I enter heart and soul into the conspiracy. All my past is blotted out. I am Steinwalder, the Socialist."

"Where do you go first?"

"To see the man I represent."

"He is confined in prison?"

"Yes, in a dark dungeon. I wish to study his peculiarities and learn something of his past that may serve me when at the council."

"How will you do this?"

Mr. Grimes shrugged his shoulders in a way that spoke louder than his words.

"These Germans have a way peculiar to themselves of making a man talk. I don't pretend to know what it is—by torture, possibly, or threats. At any rate, Steinwalder is ready to tell everything that ever happened to him from his childhood up—to betray the deepest secrets of his order."

"Bah!"

"Of course it seems cowardly, but, you see, the innate fear they have of the powers over them makes men different here from what we would expect to find them across the water."

"Of course."

"He understands that the game is up—that the whole conspiracy has been blown by another of the council, and is simply seeking to save his own life in the matter."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HOT-BED OF PLOTTERS.

Mr. Grimes next went to the prison, where he had a note from his friend, who was at the head of the police force.

It worked like magic.

Treated with every consideration, he was immediately taken to the dungeon where the original Steinwalder had been incarcerated.

"Leave me with him one hour, also your lantern," he said to the jailer.

The door was opened, and, as he entered, closed again.

He heard the heavy key turned in the lock.

Mr. Grimes found himself inside a German dungeon at last, but his position was not such as to cause him great inconvenience.

He looked around.

The cell was small.

It could be all seen by the aid of the lantern.

At one end was a rude pallet, and upon this sat a man who had evidently been asleep until aroused by the clang of the heavy door.

He sat there blinking at the light.

This was Steinwalder, the man who had sworn to the secret council to take the life of Bismarck when the time came that was so near at hand.

He had a heavy shock of hair, and was not unlike some of the anarchists whom Mr. Grimes had met with in America.

Without wasting any time he sat down and entered into conversation.

No man could draw another out better than this self-same Yankee detective.

He put questions, cunningly devised, and yet which contained a hidden meaning, although outwardly they were innocent looking enough.

Thus, thread by thread, he began to weave the woof upon which he meant to build his fabric.

To him it was a task of love.

He could wind this man around his fingers without the least difficulty.

To his surprise, Steinwalder spoke English well.

He had lived in Chicago and Milwaukee for a number of years, and returned to Germany to participate in the work to which he was called.

The society to which he belonged embraced thousands, and certain members had been selected to do this awful work.

To decline meant death, and when he received his notification over the sea he had answered the call, unwillingly, he declared, but because he did not see how there could be any escape.

By degrees Mr. Grimes learned all he wished.

The hour elapsed.

His time was up.

So profitably had he spent it that everything he desired to know was in his possession.

The turnkey rapped on the door.

"I am ready," said Mr. Grimes, in German.

He was led out of the corridor, through the offices, to the street.

No one inquired his business.

It was enough that he came there bearing the full authority of their chief.

So Mr. Grimes was already prepared to start upon his mission.

He went to his hotel.

Here he slept until daybreak.

After breakfast, eaten alone, he sauntered out to apparently survey the situation.

When passing the marked house he was joined by Waldeck, just as he expected would be the case.

"Good-morning, Mr. Steinwalder."

"Ah! is it you, my good Waldeck? What news?"

"Glorious news. I have received private information from the bedside of Frederick."

"Yes."

"He is very low."

"That is nothing new. Several times already he has been reported dying, and then, behold, he gets stronger than ever before."

"That is the news given to the people. I know better. My information comes from an authentic source. Each time Frederick grows weaker. The very next attack will end it all."

"It cannot come too soon."

"It will come to-morrow."

"Ah! are you sure?"

"I will almost stake my life on it."

"Then to-morrow——"

"Sees Germany free from the rule of those we hate—glorious day for us."

"Hush! man, not so loud. You forget that spies lurk everywhere. Even these linden trees may have ears to catch such talk."

"True, true, I was incautious. There will be a meeting to-night, Herr Steinwalder."

"So I understand from the signs."

"You have not been to our meeting-place yet, of course, having arrived so recently?"

"No."

"Suppose we go together."

"It will suit me well."

"To-night, then, at eleven, walk past this house. If you see a light in the window, rap for admittance on the door. You know the signal?"

"The Watch on the Rhine."

"Correct. At eleven, then. This is likely to be the last meeting of the select council of those who are to do the work of freedom. Within the hour some of them will be speeding to various points where the objects of their interest are."

"We remain in Berlin."

"Yes, our work is here. Let us see to it that it is well done, since to our hands is intrusted the most important blow of all. A Bismarck dies hard, I tell you, Herr Steinwalder."

The other raised his heavy cane.

"When the wheels of the carriage crunch that stick an explosion will follow that will startle the whole civilized world. Germany will have spoken, and thrown off her shackles. There shall not be a bit of that vehicle left large enough to be used as a policeman's club across the water."

The other seemed pleased at his words.

He shook Steinwalder's hand heartily.

Parting from the conspirator, Mr. Grimes continued his saunter down the avenue.

Five minutes later he met a man, who appeared to be an ordinary artisan.

This German gave Mr. Grimes a private signal, which the latter recognized as marking him one of the secret police, under the charge of the chief, and employed to assist in this great undertaking.

To this man, while seemingly asking questions about the city, Mr. Grimes delivered a report of what he had already accomplished.

Then he slipped a coin ostentatiously into the artisan's palm, made a gesture of thanks, and continued his walk as if unconscious of the fact that a pair of keen eyes belonging to a man with a red beard across the street had been upon him.

This man was one of the secret council.

He had recognized Steinwalder, and for some purpose

of his own was watching him, not that he had any particular suspicion, but perhaps on the general principle that men who were risking liberty and life in such a gigantic enterprise had better keep an eye on each other.

It did not matter.

Mr. Grimes' report would be in the office of the director of police within ten minutes.

He spent the morning thus sauntering about in a manner not to attract attention.

The day passed slowly.

Once or twice some little excitement was caused by reports that the stricken emperor was much worse, but these were not authentic, so the city lay in suspense, awaiting the end.

Night came.

It was destined to be a night that would go down in the secret history of the life of the great Bismarck marked with a red cross.

His cunning had been matched against the conspirators, and ere another sun had set the game would have ended.

Mr. Grimes spent his time profitably.

He knew what awaited him.

To enter the council of these men as one of their number he assumed terrible risks.

It was an old story to him.

Life would hardly be worth living had he been cut off from taking risks.

Mr. Grimes knew there would be many members of the secret police within call at the time the meeting was to be held.

This was done with an object.

The life of Waldeck was not of so much value, but should the traitor be detected it was probable the rest of the schemers would separate, and be lost.

Under such circumstances, in order to secure the plotters, Waldeck was to hide a force of police near the place of meeting.

If there were signs of his being found out, he was to give the signal, and suddenly the room would swarm with the minions of German justice so hated by the socialist plotters.

Understanding all this, Mr. Grimes had no fear on the part of personal safety.

He was ready and eager for the fray.

Time passed, and the hour was near at hand.

Without the slightest symptom of fear he began to walk down toward the house that had been engaged by the conspirators, and from the windows of which Waldeck was to use his gun in case the man with the dynamite failed to accomplish his awful work.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"SUCH IS THE FATE OF ALL TRAITORS!"

Mr. Grimes having the idea of punctuality absorbed in his nature, arrived at the marked house exactly on time.

The hour of eleven was being struck by the clock in a steeple near by, just as he rapped upon the door of the building.

His summons was soon answered.

To the man who appeared he gave the regular password, and thus the phrase that had been a bulwark of confidence to the army in France when battling for the Fatherland, was abused by being made the signal of the very gang that now threatened the life of the nation.

"To what base uses good things are often put," Mr. Grimes thought, as, under the magical influence of the Watch on the Rhine, he found himself admitted into the house.

It did not differ from other houses, so far as the American saw.

The man who had admitted him led the way to a back room.

Here he found Waldeck.

The man looked nervous.

Well he might, seeing that, the way things were running now, he was between two fires.

Well might he consider the question which Mr. Grimes had put to O'Connor—which was the most painless death—by the rope, or through the influence of a keen dagger.

There was some danger to him.

With a dozen desperate men turning upon him as a traitor, he might give the signal, and the police close in so as to prevent a single man leaving the place, but they could not prevent those dozen daggers from being sheathed in his body.

Mr. Grimes sized him up immediately.

Waldeck was growing alarmed.

It was as the detective had feared—the man actually did not have backbone enough to carry out the part he had assumed.

This would not do.

In some way or other he must be braced up.

Having considered this matter before, Mr. Grimes was in a condition to act.

He would give Waldeck a hint.

The other made a great pretense of being glad to see Steinwalder, when all the while he was shivering in his shoes for fear the hidden police might betray their presence in some way.

"I believe you are the last to come, Herr Steinwalder. The rest are already there."

"I am on time. The clock has just struck."

"Oh, yes. In another hour it will be midnight. All Berlin sleeps, dreaming not of the great events that are so soon to happen."

He would keep his character up to the end.

Mr. Grimes caught his eye.

Waldeck could not return the glance—his own orb fell in a weak way.

"Come, I will take you to the meeting-place. It is time you met the others who are with us in this glorious business. Follow me."

"Wait."

Waldeck turned around.

"What would you, comrade."

"A little talk alone. Waldeck, I know more than you imagine."

"Eh?"

"Even your thoughts, man, as you stand there, I can read at my will."

"Nonsense!" with a short, strained laugh.

"Just now you are in fear lest an incautious sneeze or a cough might bring ruin upon you."

"Confusion—I—you—this is false—I——"

"Waldeck, deny it not. I know even the number of police officers secreted in this house."

The wretched plotter turned yellow with fear.

His eyes seemed starting from his head.

"I am lost!"

As he uttered these words he put his hand to his pocket to draw a weapon, whether determined to fight for liberty or put an end to his own life could not well be known.

"Stop, Waldeck! Do nothing rash until you have heard all I would say. Your treachery is not known to your companions of the league. I alone know of it."

"But—you—Steinwalder—believed to be true to the interests of the party—how is it that you speak thus instead of taking my life?"

"Steinwalder lies in the blackest dungeon in the city of Berlin this night."

"And you?"

"An officer, a detective, sent from the head office to assist in winding the web around the league."

Waldeck no longer shivered like an aspen leaf.

His fears had vanished.

Instead of sudden death, the presence of this man promised him life.

New hope sprang up in his soul. He held out his hand toward the detective, but Mr. Grimes made no effort to clasp it in his own.

"Pardon me, Herr Waldeck, but you and I are not made on the same plan. I am here to assist you in the work—to see that you get through with credit—but that does not make us boon companions. To business. You tell me our friends are all on hand?"

"Yes," returned the other, swallowing his chagrin and wounded pride, with the thought that at least his life was safe.

"The house is surrounded?"

A nod of the head.

"And if desirable, the whole gang can be captured this night?"

"It was arranged otherwise—there are others——"

"I know all about that, Waldeck. This little arrangement is managed only that in case of accident these ringleaders would not escape."

"Exactly."

"The chief was afraid you might show by your nervousness that something was wrong, and excite the alarm of the plotters."

"So he sent you to cheer me up?"

"Well, in a manner. Misery likes company, you know. I have my own little business to attend to at the same time."

"Of course."

The man was rapidly recovering himself.

Wounded vanity will often do more than anything else to make a man valiant.

He even laughed a little as though this sort of business were an every-day occurrence.

This was the same man who, five minutes before, had been trembling with fear, carrying such an anxious, haunted look upon his face that he was giving his secret dead away.

Already Mr. Grimes had accomplished wonders.

He realized the sagacity of the director of police, who wanted him to brace this man up.

"I am ready to join the rest, Waldeck."

"Very good. I want you to watch how well I shall play my part—what a ferocious king-killer Waldeck is among kindred souls."

Looking at him, Mr. Grimes saw that the man had changed entirely around.

Instead of being fearful, he was reckless.

Whatever he had intended doing would be well carried out now, that was sure.

"Lead on, Waldeck, old boy."

With this jocular remark the American detective prepared to enter the inner council of the secret order, where his life would be hardly worth the snap of a finger were his identity discovered.

He followed his guide.

Waldeck led him along a corridor.

Then they came to what was apparently the solid wall; but in these old houses of Berlin exist many secrets of the years long since gone by, when men's lives were in continual danger from enemies without, and it was deemed the proper thing to have a hiding-place inside of one's own domicile.

When Waldeck pressed the wall in a certain spot the whole section opened like an immense door.

"Enter, friend."

Without hesitation the detective did so.

He had no fears.

This man had sold himself, and would not dare attempt any treachery toward the representative of the chief of police.

Waldeck pushed after him.

The wall slipped back into place again.

"Now, advance. Keep the wall on the right all the way until I tell you to change."

This was very simple advice, and if diligently followed, one could not go astray.

Still, when the occasion came, the detective caught hold of the other's coat, feeling safer about the route.

They soon descended.

Mr. Grimes had supposed it would come to this, since dynamiters generally select a cellar to plot in. Under the streets of Berlin and Moscow there have been many a terrible scheme put together, and more than one worked out—for instance, the dastardly affair that resulted in the death of the Czar Alexander, father of the present Emperor of Russia, when a bomb exploded under his carriage and shattered his leg, bringing about death.

"We are there," said Waldeck at last.

The darkness was intense.

Not one ray of light fell upon the scene until a door was suddenly opened.

Then the American detective found himself looking upon a scene that would never be effaced from his memory while he lived.

Lights were in the room beyond, though not enough of them to brilliantly illumine it.

A dozen men stood around in small groups.

It was a representative anarchist assembly, such as might have come together before the throwing of the bomb in the Haymarket tragedy in far away Chicago, or previous to the killing of the Czar of all the Russias.

Every man's face was a study.

They were a fierce, wild, desperate set of men, these plotters of Berlin.

They claimed to be for liberty.

Mr. Grimes gave his eagle eye a good opportunity to analyze their features, and he found everything that goes to make heroes lacking even to the enthusiasm that spurs them on.

Dogged determination he found in every countenance, and eyes that blazed with the wicked desires of their souls.

He had been right in his conjectures.

These men cared nothing about the liberty of the German people. They undertook this awful job because they loved bloodshed, and thought they might be made heroes by the deed.

What compunctions he might have had about helping to smother a righteous struggle for political liberty were set at rest when he looked upon the men composing the secret council.

They were adventurers—king-haters—the mere scum of the body politic in the empire.

Some of them looked to Mr. Grimes as though they had only the brute instincts of dogs.

He even began to take a positive delight in the very thought of baffling their evil designs.

"Gentlemen, here is our absent member. Herr Steinwalder has arrived in time to do his great and glorious work."

One by one he introduced them.

To each in turn Mr. Grimes was compelled to give the secret grip.

This ceremony was completed at last.

Then they took hold of hands, forming a circle around a table where a cloth hid some object from their view.

One, who seemed to be leader, stepped into the circle and spoke.

"We are all here but one—who can mention the name of the absent member?"

"Bruno Waldemar."

"Ay, that is he. That man would have sold us for money to the police at Stuttgart. We intercepted his letter containing the proposition to sell us out. Behold the result!"

The black cloth was whipped from the table.

All gave a cry of horror.

Upon a metal platter lay a human head, bolt upright, bloody, where it had been severed from the trunk, the eyes wide open and glassy.

"Such is the fate of traitors!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BRANDED ARM.

Mr. Grimes preserved the utmost composure while these words were uttered.

Nor did the ghastly spectacle upon the table appear to unnerve him to any extent.

His long experience enabled him to meet any such trial with fortitude.

Besides, he had really been expecting something in that order of things.

The situation promised it.

This was not his first experience in a secret society, and he knew of many things done by such organizations to strike alarm into the hearts of their members, and prevent treachery.

His first thought was of Waldeck.

Would that worthy betray himself?

A guilty conscience, and the fact that he was by nature a coward, might so work upon him that his face would tell the story.

Under these circumstances it was with some little un-

easiness that the detective looked in the direction of the man.

To his surprise he found Waldeck to be no more moved by the ghastly sight than the rest.

His eyes rested upon it with something of horrible fascination.

So did the others look the same way.

It immediatey flashed through the detective's mind that Waldeck was not at all taken by surprise.

He had known of the head before.

Indeed, it was very likely the man had assisted to place it here.

This was his headquarters. He was supposed to be the German who had hired the whole house—not one *etage* or floor—under the pretense that his family was about to join him, coming over from America by way of Hamburg.

When Mr. Grimes looked around again he was surprised to see several of the men looking intently at him.

It flashed upon him that possibly Steinwalder was under suspicion.

Perhaps jealousy caused it.

The man had been appointed to do the highest piece of work the conspiracy offered.

It was but reasonable to suppose there would be those who would envy him.

This must not be.

Mr. Grimes was equal to the occasion.

He immediately spoke up.

"I have come many thousands of miles to obey the call of duty. One traitor has been punished with death. That is well, but I see some present look at me significantly. That is bad. If we mean to carry out our glorious plan we must have confidence in each other. You accept me as Steinwalder, your comrade. I know all the signs, the signals. My good friend Waldeck here will vouch for my identity, for my loyalty."

Waldeck nodded vehemently.

It was just as bad to have the government detective discovered as himself, since it would in all probability precipitate matters.

"Let this settle the matter."

As the pretended Steinwalder spoke he slowly rolled up the right sleeve of his shirt, having first removed his heavy coat.

The action exposed a mark upon the skin.

It appeared to be a brand, as if made by a red-hot iron months before.

Two strokes had formed a rude cross.

By this scarred emblem these men worked.

Each of them had the brand on his arm.

Mr. Grimes had cleverly imitated the marks Steinwalder had shown him.

They were stamped upon his arm with a kind of indelible ink, and so nicely done that it would take even the closest investigation to discover any particular fraud about the matter.

The sight of these two cross bars seemed to remove whatever suspicion the others might have entertained toward him.

"Herr Steinwalder, I believe you mistake the sentiments of our comrades. If there is one present who has the least suspicion connected with this comrade who comes across the ocean by way of France to fulfill his oath, let that party speak now or forever hold his peace."

Intense silence followed.

Steinwalder unrolled his sleeve and resumed his jacket again, as if mollified.

"The meeting will come to order."

Again the cloth was thrown over the ghastly head that stood upon the table.

For some time business went on.

Each man in turn stepped forward and gave a short but graphic account of the work that had been cut out for him ahead.

The details were very exact.

Some of these accounts were quite graphic, and exhibited various degrees of talent in thus detailing them.

Others were brief, and given in the phlegmatic manner peculiar to Germans. All, however, contained the one element—they were full of horror.

Mr. Grimes had his ears open.

He heard all that the chief of police desired to know.

Up to this meeting no one of the conspirators knew the full arrangement that had been made.

This was probably the first time all of those chosen to carry out the gigantic scheme of the central committee of three had met together.

Waldeck was the last one to speak.

He gave an account of the grave duty that would devolve upon him in case Steinwalder failed to accomplish his purpose

But he did not stop here.

Turning to the leader he said:

"Herr President, there is news."

"Say you so, comrade."

"I have received a cipher telegram from Burger, who is near the bedside of Frederick."

"Proceed."

"He positively declares the emperor is going fast."

"It is good."

"And that we must prepare immediately for the work to which we are sworn."

"Little remains to be done."

"To-morrow, without doubt, news will reach Berlin that Frederick is dead."

"Happy day."

"This night then, those whose duty takes them away from the capital must start."

"Ay, this very hour."

"To-morrow's setting sun sees Germany free from the rule of tyrants, or all who stand here now, hand in hand, the brotherhood of victory, dead."

"Swear it!"

Each man raised his right hand.

After the leader then they repeated a terrible oath.

Waldeck said his part without a tremor.

Some men can go through with a hollow mockery without trouble.

Others would hesitate until it seemed as if the words stuck in their throats.

When this ceremony was gone through with they shook hands again.

Four of the number were to leave at once, their destination being far enough away to warrant such immediate action on their part.

A short time later two others would also hasten to the place where their work lay.

It will be seen that two were given the same job all through, so as to make it more certain that the object would be accomplished.

Last directions were given those who meant to speedily depart.

At a certain hour, Waldeck had declared, the news would be flashed about that Frederick had departed this life.

This was at noon.

Within the next half hour the work must be prosecuted all over the empire.

Half a dozen terrible blows would be struck.

After that—well, these brilliant plotters did not seem to figure much beyond this point.

Like Booth and his fellows, who expected great things to spring from their bloody work, they let the future take care of itself.

The meeting was over.

Four shadowy figures left the house under the directions of Waldeck.

Mr. Grimes had mental descriptions of one and all of these characters.

He had not lost a point.

The remainder of the plotters remained a while.

They talked cheerily of what lay before them, and the bright prospect which seemed to be in store for their plans.

Every one seemed enthusiastic.

It seemed as though nothing could prevent them from accomplishing the great sacrifice.

To-morrow, then, ere the clocks struck one, all Germany was to tremble under the hand of the mysterious secret council. Those in authority would meet death, some dictator would spring to the head of the army, and announce that from the hour of Frederick's death Germany was a republic.

They parted at last.

Mr. Grimes bent forward, and whispered in the ear of Waldeck as he left:

"Courage—all goes well!"

Then he was out in the street.

He did not believe there was any one who would be interested in following him, but, all the same, he took care to carry out several little ideas of his own, by means of which any pursuer would be confused.

It was not his desire that mortal eyes should see where he went now.

Within the half hour he turned up at the office of the director of police.

That official greeted him with warmth.

He saw that he had made no mistake with regard to his man.

Mr. Grimes was equal to the emergency.

Without wasting time the Yankee detective entered into a description of what he had done.

When he came to a description of the several men, with their destination, what train they would take, and all such minor details, the other rapidly wrote down all he said.

Thus everything was known.

The government telegraph would be set to work within the next half hour.

When those six different men landed from their trains at their destinations they would find a file of soldiers awaiting them.

From that hour they would be dead to the world.

As to those in Berlin, they would be well looked after—that was certain.

"Herr Grimes, the empire owes you a world of thanks for this. It will serve to cement the bonds between your country and mine closer. In our way we all try for good government. What pleases our people might not satisfy yours, but on one point we agree, and that is our common hatred for everything relating to anarchy."

So Mr. Grimes parted from the chief.

He never saw him again.

Only once he heard from the man who holds the mighty police force of Germany in his hand.

On the following day a messenger came to the hotel with a little packet.

It was for Herr Grimes.

Opening it he found a letter of thanks from the director of police:

"Prince Bismarck begs you to wear the inclosed little jewel in remembrance of your services in behalf of the Fatherland."

The inclosed was a small medal of silver, bearing the single name "Bismarck," and underneath a diamond that flashed like a sunbeam.

Singular, indeed, and yet emblematic of that rough yet great nature who sent it.

Mr. Grimes prized the Bismarck medal more than anything else he owned.

It was something to be able to say he had rendered a service to the greatest man alive.

He always believed it an honor, and was never prone to regret the day he entered into the game with the Berlin chief of police to hoodwink the conspirators against the government.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

All went off as was expected—not by the plotters, but by the police authorities.

Secret word was received in Berlin that the six men were in custody at the places whither they had gone to accomplish their work.

There remained but those in Berlin.

They were only four in number, since Waldeck had turned government spy, and Steinwalder was already in a dungeon.

Toward noon the rumor got abroad that the Emperor Frederick was dead.

No one could tell whence it started, but it was in every one's mouth.

Official recognition of the fact was wanting, but this did not make it less a truth in the minds of the common people.

Frederick was loved—his son William feared, because little was really known of him then, so the people were ready to deeply mourn.

Believing the news to be true, as it had already been anticipated by their private advices, the four conspirators set out to do the terrible work which had been laid out for them by the mysterious council of three.

They were caught in the act.

Detectives swarmed in the region where their so-called duty took them.

At one o'clock on this day Germany was quiet.

The rumors of Frederick's death were officially denied—indeed, he even took a turn for the better.

It will be remembered that the conspirators had declared positively that at this hour, on this very day, Germany would be free from those who ruled her with a rod of iron, or else every one of the plotters would have ceased to exist.

Neither of these prophecies came to pass.

Instead, all of them save Waldeck, the traitor, lay in deep dungeons.

The utmost secrecy was maintained by the government over these arrests.

None of the papers mentioned them.

There was an object back of this.

In the first place, time was given Waldeck to get out of the country, and conceal his identity under another name somewhere.

He had doubtless been well paid for his treachery.

Then, again, publicity is avoided in such matters, because it has a bad effect on the public mind.

Over here we court it.

In Germany they do things differently, and perhaps it is just as well.

To have given these men, caught in the act, a public trial would, in the first place, have shown the people that there were bitter seeds of resentment against the rulers of Germany in their midst, and wavering minds would have been turned into the path that led the same way.

As it was, the sudden and complete disappearance of all these men on the eve of their anticipated break for liberty would paralyze the balance of those belonging to the secret community.

There would be something so terrible in the fact of their leaders having been swallowed up that the effect must be far-reaching.

Perhaps the secret council was crushed to the earth, but it would rise again.

Dissatisfied elements are always at work in a monarchy like Germany, and from time to time these fiery elements must crop out.

When Mr. Grimes found O'Connor in the morning, after getting a few hours sleep, he was glad to learn that all was well.

"To-night, then, we leave Berlin."

"It is on to St. Petersburg."

The old detective saw that his friend was anxious for the story of his adventures.

He knew there was no longer reason for secrecy on his part.

By this time the plotters who had gone to different points to do the will of the council had been arrested, and it was nearly time for those in the city to fall also.

"I rather reckon the carriage of Prince Bismarck won't roll over this dynamite cane of Steinwalder's on the Under der Linden to-day," said the detective, with a smile.

While he was yet talking the messenger came, who brought the note from the chief of police and the medal from Bismarck.

Mr. Grimes showed some emotion.

It was the first time O'Connor had ever seen him really affected.

Later on the rest of the party joined them.

O'Connor showed the medal and note.

Of course they were anxious to hear the whole story, and Mr. Grimes had to give it.

There were so many details that it took him a long time.

He looked at his watch several times.

At length, as he finished his story, he said:

"It is just one o'clock—am I correct?"

"Yes," said O'Connor, looking at his watch.

"Then by this time the last of the plotters against the peace of the Fatherland has been gathered in, and reposes in a German dungeon."

Hardly had he spoken before there was a rap at the door.

"Come in."

A messenger entered.

Mr. Grimes took the note.

"Ah," said he, looking at the address, "from the director of police again."

"I can guess its import," declared O'Connor.

Mr. Grimes looked up.

"What I said is true. See what he writes—simply: 'Germany rests in peace—the last conspirator has heard the dungeon door close behind him.'"

They looked at each other.

"Heaven have mercy on the poor wretches, for they'll never see the light of day again, unless some revolution opens the doors, as those of the Bastile were opened during the Reign of Terror, and political prisoners led out who had been immured there ten or twenty years, their fate unknown, themselves utterly forgotten by the outer world."

Our friends now put these things away.

They did not concern them.

Other things there were that did, and to these they now devoted themselves.

Arrangements were made to leave Berlin that night for Russia.

As yet their pursuers did not seem to have arrived in the German capital—at least they had not shown themselves, though it might be possible they were concocting some fiendish plot to insnare the party in their net.

From political machinations it was but a step to this other danger.

Mr. Grimes was equal to it.

He went out to make the arrangements.

When he came back some hours later he had a gentleman with him, whom he introduced as Professor Carpenter, the proprietor of an American enterprise being exhibited in the various cities around Europe.

The detective's face was a study.

O'Connor saw trouble ahead.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Where's Gratton?"

"In the next room."

"Call him in."

The Irish Monte Cristo did so, and at the same time thought what in the name of wonder he had brought this gentleman with him for.

Gratton also saw the troubled look.

"Hello! they've come to town, eh?"

"Yes, bless me if the whole seven ain't here in Berlin at this moment."

Gratton whistled.

O'Connor frowned.

"I found them at every railway station in Berlin, keenly on the watch. It is my belief that they are getting ready for a final stroke, and do not mean to act until all is prepared."

"This is getting beyond endurance. You are in with the chief of police, suppose you have him arrest the whole seven of these chaps, and hold them for a month or two under suspicion of being concerned in this conspiracy."

"That wouldn't be a bad plan," said Gratton.

"I have a better," returned Mr. Grimes, quietly.

"Let us have it."

"I know how we can leave Berlin, and it will puzzle those fellows to ever discover the manner in which we accomplished it."

"They will discover our trail in time."

"But we will leave none."

"Eh?"

"I say we will leave no trail."

"How can that be?"

"We will pass over the housetops, through the air."

The others looked at him amazed.

"Poor fellow! much trouble has made him mad," muttered O'Connor.

"Do you mean to grow us wings?" asked the more practical Gratton.

"No, but my good friend Carpenter here will hire us his for fair price."

"Indeed! I begin to smell a rat. You called him professor a few minutes ago?"

"Yes."

"Is he an aeronaut?"

"Just so. He owns the mammoth balloon that daily takes people up for an observation, and a goodly number of silver pieces. It is called a captive balloon because a rope only allows it to go up a thousand feet or so."

"Yes—go on."

"I propose that we go up with him to-morrow, and that the rope shall in some way get away, so that we sail off through space, provided the wind wafts us north-west toward the Russian domains."

"There may be trouble with the authorities."

"I will write to my friend the chief of police, and get full authority for all we undertake."

"What small baggage we have——"

"Can be taken secretly to the grounds, and stowed in the air ship. One difficulty only stands in the way of success."

"And that?"

"The consent of the ladies."

"I will soon see about that."

O'Connor was now enthusiastic over the proposal submitted by the detective.

He came back in a short time not only with the consent of the fair ones, but the ladies themselves accompanied him, eager to meet the bold Yankee aeronaut, and discuss the novel scheme.

Fear they seemed to have none.

So it came to pass that on the following afternoon the party reached the spot where the captive balloon was in readiness.

Quite a crowd had collected.

Our friends were the only ones allowed to enter the car, for the proprietor had told the people the air-ship was chartered for the day.

He had paid his assistants, who were in the secret, so nothing remained to be done.

The signal was given, the ropes unloosed, and the balloon shot upward, a captive no longer.

No long rope held the aerial monster to the earth as had previously been the case.

Up the balloon shot.

The whole of the German capital lay under them—a sight few eyes have beheld.

It was a glorious spectacle.

The whole party were charmed.

"Let them watch the stations well," said Mr. Grimes, with a laugh, "they will awaken to the truth that Yankee brains are too much for them."

"Good-by, Gonzales," said O'Connor, waving his hand in good-humor, "fare thee well, and if forever, then forever fare thee well."

The west wind bore them over the eastern part of Berlin; far away toward the land of the setting sun they could see the course of the river Elbe; nearer and in their track lay the Oder.

Higher mounted the balloon. The city began to fade away in the distance. They were flying through space toward Russia, while darkness was creeping over the land below, even though the sun remained visible to their eyes.

Thus the Irish Monte Cristo sailed from Berlin, but whether he had left his trouble behind for good the future alone could tell.

[THE END.]

"POLK WELLS, JESSE JAMES' COMRADE," by W. B. Lawson, will be published in the next number (171) of the LOG CABIN LIBRARY.

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